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ENGLISH MEN OF LETTERS

HOBBES

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HOBBES

BY

SIR LESLIE STEPHEN

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

PAGE

LIFE 1

CHAPTER II

THE WORLD 70

CHAPTER III

MAN 114

CHAPTER IV

THE STATE 173

INDEX 239

HOBBES

CHAPTER I

LIFE

THE biographer of the present day knows not whether to envy or to pity his predecessors in the seventeenth century. The increased advantages bring responsibilities. The materials available were formerly of manageable bulk; nor was it thought necessary to emulate scientific procedure by minutely investigating a man's "environment" and tracing all the influences which moulded his character or the character of his ancestors. Thomas Hobbes, of Malmesbury, author of the *Leviathan*, was the most conspicuous English thinker in the whole period between Bacon and Locke, and his long career, described on the modern scale, would certainly have filled at least a couple of portly volumes. The actual accounts fill only a few pages. They tantalise the reader by many glimpses of a very interesting personality. Yet, brief as they are, they give perhaps as distinct an impression of the main outlines of a notable figure as could have been produced by far more elaborate detail.

Hobbes himself was obviously convinced—I have reasons for hoping that his conviction was well founded

—that a distant posterity would thirst for information about him. At the age of eighty-four he wrote an autobiography in Latin elegiacs. Two years later Anthony Wood published his book upon the history and antiquities of the University of Oxford. Through John Aubrey, their common friend, he obtained for it an autobiographical notice from Hobbes. Unluckily Dr. Fell, Dean of Christchurch, who bore the expense of publishing, claimed also the right of editing the work. Hobbes's statement that he had spent a certain period *in scribendo librum, qui nunc non solum in Anglia sed in vicinis gentibus notissimus est nomine Leviathan* was amended by inserting *monstrosissimum* after *librum*, and *publico damno* before *notissimus*. Hobbes was informed of this and other changes in the same spirit, and printed a remonstrance. Fell replied (what it was hardly for him to say) that an old man, with one foot in the grave, ought not to trouble himself and the world about such trifles, and printed at the end of the book a contemptuous reply to *irritabile illud et vanissimum animal Malmesburiense*. The original autobiography fortunately remains; it was printed soon after Hobbes's death along with the poem, and a *Vitæ Hobbianæ Auctarium* (by a Dr. Blackbourne) containing some further information. The Auctarium was founded upon the collections of Aubrey, made for the benefit of Wood's later book the *Athenæ Oxonienses*. Aubrey was a personal friend of Hobbes, who came from the same county, and did his best to anticipate Boswell, though his aspirations fell far short of such success.[1] From these and sundry incidental refer-

[1] Aubrey's *Brief Lives*, containing these notes, have been carefully edited by Mr. Andrew Clark. 1898.

ences, we derive such knowledge of Hobbes as we possess; and in his case, as decidedly as in that of any philosopher, a knowledge of the man is very important to a fair appreciation of the work.

In the year 1588 a Thomas Hobbes was vicar of Westport, adjoining Malmesbury, and of the neighbouring parish of Charlton. He married, we are told, "... Middleton of Brokinborough (a yeomanly family)": but with that information students of heredity must be content. The vicar was "one of the ignorant Sir Johns of Queen Elizabeth's time: could only read the prayers of the Church and the homilies, and disesteemed learning as not knowing the sweetness of it." Another anecdote declares that he was a "good fellow," and that after playing cards all Saturday night, he went to sleep in church, and in his dreams announced to the congregation that clubs were trumps. Mrs. Hobbes heard rumours of the Spanish Armada, and apparently thought that Malmesbury would be the natural "objective" of an invading force. The result was the premature birth of her son Thomas, early in the morning of the 5th of April 1588. According to Aubrey the time was well chosen, as the child's horoscope, like that of Oliver Cromwell, indicated future eminence. Hobbes himself says that he and terror were born twins. Characteristically he speaks of his timidity with a certain complacency, and to it he attributes his hatred of his country's foes and his love of peace, with the muses and friendly company. Not long after his birth his father, "a choleric man," was provoked on purpose at the church door by "a parson (which, I think, succeeded him at Westport)." So Hobbes the elder struck him and was

forced to fly for it. He retired to a vague region "beyond London," and there disappears from history. Mrs. Hobbes was left at Malmesbury with three children, including John, Thomas's senior by two years, and a daughter. Fortunately a childless uncle, Francis Hobbes, glover and alderman of Malmesbury, took charge of the deserted family. Thomas was sent to school at Westport church at the age of four, where he learnt reading and arithmetic. Thence he passed to a school in Malmesbury, and afterwards to one kept by a Mr. Latimer, "a good Grecian, and the first that came into our parts hereabout since the Reformation." Latimer delighted in his scholar, and used to teach him with "two or three ingeniose youths more" till nine in the evening. Under this excellent master, Hobbes worked to such good purpose that at the age of fourteen he had translated the *Medea* of Euripides into Latin iambics. He was "playsome enough," though he had even then a "contemplative melancholinesse": and he was nicknamed "the crow" on account of his black hair.

The promise which he had shown induced his uncle to send him to Magdalen Hall at Oxford. He apparently began residence in the beginning of 1603 (when he would be just fifteen) but was not admitted to his B.A. degree till February 1608. At Oxford he can scarcely have fulfilled his uncle's expectations. He was one of the many eminent men who acknowledge but a small debt of gratitude to their university. Long afterwards (in his *Behemoth*) Hobbes intimates that the parliamentary commissioners, for whom he had otherwise little enough affection, did some good by purging the university of men morally unworthy,

as well as of those opposed to them in theology. Many parents, he says, had reason to complain that their sons were allowed to fall into vicious practices, and taught by incompetent tutors little older than themselves. The discipline and the studies at the Oxford of that period seem, in fact, to have been in much need of reform. Hobbes, however, writing in his old age, had other causes of quarrel with the universities, which he had come to regard as the strongholds of obscurantism; and it does not appear that, while himself a student, his eyes had been open to the evils which he afterwards recognised.

Magdalen Hall was, during the early part of the century, the favourite resort of the Puritans. But there is no symptom that Hobbes was at the time either attracted or repelled by the religious views of his teachers. His account of his studies suggests the probable state of the case. He was admitted, he says, to the class of logic, and listened eagerly to the discourse of his beardless teacher. He was put through the regular *Barbara celarent*, learnt the rules slowly, and then cast them aside, and was permitted to prove things after his own fashion. Swift, long afterwards, speaks in much the same way of his logical studies in Dublin. Then he was taught physics; the tutor explained that all things were composed of matter and form; that "species," flying through the air, impressed the eye and ear; and attributed much to sympathy and antipathy. Hobbes found such things above his understanding; but it did not apparently occur to him till a later period that they were unintelligible because nonsensical. Like many other lads, in fact, he found his lessons tiresome; and he returned to

reading the books of which he had already an imperfect knowledge. He took a particular pleasure in maps of the world and the stars; he liked to follow the sun in fancy, and to trace the voyages of the great circumnavigators, Drake and Cavendish. "He tooke great delight" as Aubrey says, "to goe to the bookbinders' shops and lie gaping on mappes"; but it does not appear that the records of the Elizabethan sailors inspired him with the usual boyish ambition of running away to sea. Aubrey records one other amusement. Hobbes told him, in order to prove the sharp-sightedness of jackdaws, how he used to tie "leaden-counters" with pack-thread, smeared with bird-lime and baited with cheese parings. The jackdaws would "spy them at a vast distance up in the aire and as far as Osney Abbey" and strike at the "baite." Athletic sports had not yet organised idleness, but Hobbes seems to have found sufficient excuses for not attending lectures. The results of his university career were so far negative; but an incident which happened soon after his degree seems to show that the authorities thought well of him: well enough, at least—for such inferences are not always very safe—to declare him fit to be employed by somebody else. The principal of Magdalen Hall recommended him to William Cavendish, afterwards first Earl of Devonshire, and Hobbes formed a connection with the Cavendish family which was of vital importance to his whole career.

The first conspicuous Cavendish, the Sir William who was employed in the visitation of monasteries by Henry VIII., and had certain pickings from their estates, married Elizabeth, a rich heiress in Derby-

shire, generally known as "Bess of Hardwick." She was an imperious lady, who induced her husband to settle in Derbyshire, where she built great houses at Hardwick and Chatsworth. She had determined, it seems, not to die as long as she could build; and it was only a hard frost, suspending her building operations, which induced her to leave the world in 1608 at the age of ninety. She had before that time married two other husbands, the last being the Earl of Shrewsbury, the host or gaoler of Mary Queen of Scots. All her fortune, however, went to her second son, William Cavendish, who also inherited at a later period the estates of his elder brother, and was thus one of the richest men in England. In 1618 he became first Earl of Devonshire, having bought the title for £10,000 from James I. In 1608, when Hobbes was leaving Oxford, he was father of a son William, afterwards second earl, two years younger than Hobbes. According to Aubrey, the younger William (possibly his father), "had a conceit that he should profit more in learning if he had a scholar of his own age to wait on him than if he had the information of a grave doctor." Hobbes became "his lordship's page, and rode a hunting and hawking with him and kept his privy purse." The "learning" seems to have been neglected: Hobbes almost forgot his Latin; but bought a few books, especially a Cæsar, which he carried in his pocket and read in the lobby "while his lord was making his visits." Another note gives a rather unpleasant aspect of Hobbes's first position. "His lord," says Aubrey, "who was a waster, sent him up and down to borrow money and to get gentlemen to be bound for him, being ashamed to speak himself." Hobbes, we are

told, "took cold, being wet in his feet (then were no hackney coaches to stand in the streets), and trod both his shoes aside the same way" (whatever that may indicate). Notwithstanding, adds Aubrey, he was loved for his facetiousness and good-nature. Young Cavendish had been married to Christiana, daughter of Edward, Lord Bruce of Kinloss. James I., who had been served by Lord Bruce in the negotiations with Cecil which secured his accession to the throne, gave the bride £5000. She was only twelve years and three months old at her marriage, and the bridegroom, who was eighteen, was, for the present, more in need of a tutor than a wife.

In 1610 the two young men made the grand tour, visiting France and Italy. No record of their adventures is preserved, but Hobbes says that he brought back some knowledge, both of the modern languages and of men and manners in the countries visited. It was the year in which Henry IV. fell by the knife of Ravaillac; Hobbes mentions the murder once or twice in his works; but it was so apt an illustration of his view as to the relation between kings and priests that no personal memory need be implied. He brought back one lesson of importance. He discovered that the scholastic doctrine, of which he had acquired a smattering at Oxford, was everywhere treated with contempt by the intelligent, and was passing out of fashion. He continued to live with the pupil who had now become a friend. For the next eighteen years Hobbes was a member of the Cavendish family. These years, he says, were by far the pleasantest of his life, and still (that is when he was eighty-four) revisited him in his dreams. His patron allowed him leisure

and provided him with books of all kinds for his studies. There was no one, says Hobbes, in whose house a man would less need a university. Having thrown aside his philosophy, Hobbes began by rubbing up his old classical knowledge. He read poets and historians with the comments of grammarians, in order to acquire the art of writing a clear Latin style, then a matter of practical importance for a man of letters. He does not mention another study which occupied part of the time. Aubrey tells us that he repented of having spent two years in reading romances and plays, and often lamented this waste of time. It might, as Aubrey suggests, "furnish him with copie of words." Anyhow, he undertook another task which, one can well believe, helped him to acquire the clear and forcible style of his English writings.

This was his translation of Thucydides. He said long after that he had learnt from Thucydides how much wiser one man is than a body of men, and meant to warn his countrymen against trusting popular orators. It must be admitted that this method of meeting democratic tendencies was decidedly roundabout. Few people could be expected to read the translated book, and those who did, might fail to draw the desired inference. Hobbes was probably crediting himself with intentions suggested by later experience. The introductory remarks show his admiration for the skill with which Thucydides has made his narrative pregnant with wisdom without digressing into lectures. He ridicules the ancient critic who assumed that the "scope of history" should be "not profit by writing truth, but delight of the hearer as if it were a song." He could not have

offered better advice to some modern historians. Hobbes, we may suppose, was not very much impressed by the weighty political utterances of the great historian, but felt a certain congeniality to his own intellectual tendencies. Anyhow the attempt to straighten out Thucydides' tough sentences into clear English was as good practice as could be desired. Hobbes had not received such training as is generally requisite for fine scholarship, and Jowett, in his preface to his own version, says that his predecessor's work is very rough and inaccurate, and has been praised beyond its merits. I cannot dispute the verdict of so high an authority. My readers may judge from a short specimen. It is part of the passage containing Thucydides' reflections upon the seditions in Corcyra. They would have a special interest for the author of the *Leviathan*.

"And many and heinous things happened in the cities through this sedition, which though they have been before, and shall be ever as long as human nature is the same, yet they are more calm and of different kinds according to the several conjunctures. For in peace and prosperity as well cities as private men are better minded because they be not plunged into necessity of doing anything against their will. But war, taking away the affluence of daily necessaries, is a most violent master, and conformeth most men's passions to the present occasion. The cities therefore being now in sedition, and those that fell into it later having heard what had been done in the former, they far exceeded the same in newness of conceit both for the art of assailing, and for the strangeness of their revenges. The received value of names im-

posed for signification of things was changed into arbitrary. For inconsiderate boldness was counted true-hearted manliness; provident deliberation a handsome fear; modesty, the cloak of cowardice; to be wise in everything, to be lazy in everything. A furious suddenness was reputed a point of valour. To readvise for the better security was held for a fair pretext of tergiversation. He that was fierce was always trusty; and he that contraried such a one was suspected. He that did insidiate, if it took, was a wise man; but he that could smell out a trap laid, a more dangerous man than he. But he that had been so provident as not to need to do the one or the other, was said to be a dissolver of society, and one that stood in fear of his adversary. In brief, he that could outstrip another in the doing of an evil act, or that could persuade another thereto that never meant it, was commended."

Such are the evils, Hobbes would have said, which follow when men's passions are let loose by the destruction or dislocation of a settled sovereign authority. He did not, however, at present set forth his own views, and the translation remained for some time unpublished. The years that he passed with the Cavendishes, the years so fondly remembered, must have been in the main devoted to thinking and reading in the intervals of the duties, whatever precisely they may have been, imposed upon him by his relation to his patron. His position enabled him to make acquaintance with some of the most famous men of the day. When Aubrey first met him a few years later (1634), his talk ran a good deal upon Ben Jonson and Sir Robert Ayton. Jonson, of course, was then

the most far shining of literary lights; and though Ayton, who was related to the wife of Hobbes's patron, has fallen into obscurity, he was then regarded as an eminent critic and poet. Hobbes submitted his Thucydides to these two. A much more interesting connection was that with Bacon. Aubrey tells some anecdotes which suggest certain chronological difficulties. Bacon, he says, "used to contemplate in his delicious walks at Gorhambury." When a notion darted into his mind, he would have it set down by one of his attendants, and he often said that Hobbes was quicker than any one else at catching his meaning and putting it down intelligibly. Aubrey says also that Hobbes helped to translate some of Bacon's essays, notably that upon the greatness of cities, into Latin: the Latin translation was published posthumously in 1636. Hobbes, too, is Aubrey's authority for the familiar story of Bacon's death being caused by the experiment of stuffing a fowl with snow. Bacon knew something of Hobbes's patron, and there is nothing improbable in the other statements. The time at which the meetings took place was probably between Bacon's loss of office in 1621 and his death in 1626. The amount of intercourse must be doubtful.

One point however is clear. Bacon and Hobbes were alike in rejecting the old scholasticism, and in being profoundly impressed by the early stages of the modern scientific movement. But in other respects the relation is one of contrast. Bacon's great aim was to extend the physical sciences by systematising experimental methods. Hobbes, though he incidentally notices one of Bacon's experiments, has, as Croom Robertson put it, "nothing but scorn for experiment

in physics." His own method is essentially deductive, and he takes no notice of what is called "Baconian induction." Hobbes's political theories have no exact counterpart in Bacon. Bacon embodied in his various writings much statesmanlike reflection, showing the deep insight of a keen observer profoundly interested in the affairs of the day. Hobbes, as we shall see, also watched the political movement of the time, but as an outside spectator; and he constructs an abstract theory as dogmatically as his successor and, in some degree, his disciple, Rousseau. The contrast of style was well put by Sprat, in answer to Sorbière, who had mentioned the personal relation, and inferred an intellectual affinity. "Bacon," he says, "is short, allusive, and abounding in metaphors: Hobbes, round, close, sparing of similitudes, but ever extraordinarily decent in them. The one's way of reasoning proceeds on particulars and pleasant images, only suggesting new ways of experimenting without any pretence to the mathematics. The other is bold, resolved, settled upon general conclusions, and in them (if we will believe his friend) dogmatical." Hobbes may doubtless have received from his intercourse with Bacon some impulse towards his philosophical enterprise, but as yet there is no proof of his having undertaken to be a philosopher at this early moment in his career, and the impulse, when it came, was derived from other sources. Other friendships, which I shall have to mention, may have begun at this period; but for the present Hobbes had made no attempt to impress the world, and would only be known to others than his immediate friends as the secretary of the Earl of Devonshire.

In 1626, on the death of the first earl, Hobbes's patron succeeded to the peerage, but died in June 1628. During the interval Hobbes wrote a Latin poem, giving an account of a short tour in the Peak, made in company with the second earl. It was, it appears, a new year's gift to his friend, who rewarded him with a present of £5. The *De Mirabilibus Pecci Carmen* begins with a description of the beauties of Chatsworth, and the early landscape-gardening of "Bess of Hardwick," where "art, dissimulating art," has produced sham rocks and streams and fountains. Then he describes the ride, in the course of which he and his companion see the seven wonders of the Peak:—Chatsworth itself, the cave called after the devil, Mam Tor, Eldon Hole, the hot spring, Pool's Cavern, and Buxton Well. Hobbes, it is needless to say, does not anticipate the Wordsworthian cult of Nature; but he is a very good specimen of the early sightseer. Eldon Hole, it seems, was already famous in the days of Queen Elizabeth. The Earl of Leicester of that time caused a man to be let down into it hanging to a rope, and then to drop stones to estimate the remaining depth. When drawn up again he was too horror-struck to speak intelligibly, was seized with a frenzy, and died in a week. I regret to see that recent explorers have not spared the romance even of Eldon Hole. It is only two hundred feet deep, with an inner cave of less than a hundred. The party slept at Buxton, where they had two baths and a very poor supper (such descriptions are an essential part of all mountaineering literature), and returned next day to Chatsworth. The excursion was, we may guess, one of the incidents which revisited Hobbes in the dreams of his old age.

Unfortunately the poet, while describing the wonders, does not condescend to report the conversation of the travellers.[1]

The death of the second earl had serious effects for Hobbes. In the "Epistle Dedicatory" prefixed to the Thucydides, Hobbes tells the young heir that he is bound to dedicate his labour to "my master now in heaven." The panegyric upon the dead man which naturally follows is honourably free from the excessive adulation of such documents. Hobbes's sincerity is unmistakable. He speaks of the earl's liberality to himself, his good sense and freedom from factious motives. He gave sound advice and was "one whom no man was able to draw or justle out of the straight path of justice. Of which virtue, I know not whether he deserved more by his severity in imposing it (as he did to his last breath) on himself, or by his magnanimity in not exacting it to himself from others. No man better discerned of men: and therefore was he constant in his friendships, because he regarded not the *fortune* nor the *adherence* but the men, with whom also he conversed with an openness of heart that had no other guard than his own integrity and that *nil conscire*. To his equals he carried himself equally, and to his inferiors familiarly; but maintaining his respect

[1] De Quincey, in his Essay upon Murder as one of the Fine Arts, quotes from an anonymous tract of 1670 ("The creed of Mr. Hobbes examined"), by Thomas Tenison, afterwards archbishop. It describes a meeting with Hobbes at Buxton, to which place Hobbes's poem had attracted the author. Hobbes has a long dialogue with a student of divinity, and is thoroughly confuted. Tenison however states that the introductory circumstances as well as the dialogue are purely fictitious.

fully and only with the native splendour of his birth. In sum, he was one in whom it might plainly be perceived that honour and honesty are but the same thing in different degrees of persons." The earl had shown some independence during his short tenure of the peerage by opposing the Duke of Buckingham. He had, however, spent his large revenues too lavishly and been obliged to get a private act of Parliament to enable him to sell some entailed estates. His death, 20th June 1628, was said to have been hastened by "excessive indulgence in good living." Hobbes naturally does not mention this in his dedication; but he suffered from the consequences.

The widowed countess, left with three children, the eldest son eleven years old, set about regulating her affairs, as became her Scottish descent. She was an intelligent and energetic woman, admired in later years by Edmund Waller and others, and on friendly terms with Hobbes. The retrenchments, however, which she thought necessary, involved his leaving his old situation, and he had to look out for other means of support. He accepted the position of travelling tutor to the son of Sir Gervase Clinton, of an old Nottinghamshire family. A letter from Wotton to Sir Thomas Wentworth (4th April 1628) mentions the lad: "Pray tell him [Sir G. Clinton] that when he sent his son hither [to Eton, of which Wotton was then provost] he honoured, and when he took him away he wounded us. For in this Royal Seminary we are in one thing and only one like the Jesuits, that we all joy when we get a spirit upon whom much may be worked." We may hope, therefore, that Hobbes had a satisfactory pupil. They were abroad for eighteen months. An

undated letter mentions an intended visit to Venice, probably prevented by war. Hobbes was now forty, a time by which a man's intellect is generally ripe and his aspirations tolerably fixed. He had passed years in quiet study, and must have been interested in the political questions which were becoming daily more pressing in England. He must, one supposes, have had comparisons suggested to him by the state of things in France, where Richelieu was building up the great state which most nearly represented his own ideal "Leviathan," while in the country of Machiavelli, he would be led to observe the famous constitution of Venice, admired by so many of his contemporaries as the highest achievement of political architecture, and would have his own thoughts about the great spiritual power which now occupied the seat of the Roman empire. Hobbes's method, however, involves little appeal to observation of particular events or to his own personal experience, however deeply they may have impressed him. He tells us, on the other hand, of one discovery which was certainly borne in upon him during this journey, while another may probably belong to it or to his next visit to the continent. The incidents might as well have occurred at London as in Paris. The first is best told by Aubrey: "Being in a gentleman's library Euclid's *Elements* lay open, and 'twas the 47th *El. libri I.* He read the proposition. 'By God,' sayd he, 'this is impossible'" (he would now and then swear by way of emphasis, as Aubrey apologetically notes). "So he reads the demonstration of it which referred him back to such a proposition: which proposition he read. That referred him back to another, which he also read.

Et sic deinceps that at last he was demonstratively convinced of that truth. This made him in love with geometry." The knowledge, it must be admitted, came rather late, and the ignorance is not to the credit of his early instructors. As I shall have to say, however, the effect upon his later speculations was of singular importance. The second incident, whenever it happened, was equally fruitful. He was at a gathering of "learned men," where something was said about sensation. One of them asked, as in contempt, what was sense? Hobbes thereupon wondered how it happened that men who took such pride in the title of "wise" could be ignorant of the nature of their own senses. Thinking over the matter himself, he remarked that if all things were at rest or all moved alike, there could be no difference of things and consequently no sense. He inferred that the cause of all things must be sought in the difference of their movements. This again threw him back upon geometry, and led him to what he took to be his great discoveries. Such is the difference, is his comment, between those who seek for truth by their own genius, and those who seek it by consulting authority or for purposes of gain. Whatever may be thought of his principles, he is certainly a remarkable instance of an active mind set at work by remarks which others pass by as common-places. I shall have to speak hereafter of the essential part which these two doctrines played in his later speculation.[1]

[1] There are certain difficulties about the date of the conversation "with learned men": and the discovery by Dr. Tönnies of a MS. treatise in Hobbes's hand, giving an early version of his doctrine, rather complicates the question as to the evolution of his thought. I need not, however, go into these details. See Robertson, p. 35 *n*.

It is for the present enough to observe that we may consider Hobbes as engaged in the elaboration of his philosophy from this period. He had hitherto, after learning the futility of the Oxford scholasticism, been interested in literature and especially in the historians, with reference, no doubt, to the political questions of the time. He now took up philosophy again from the scientific and mathematical side, and elaborated the ambitious scheme of which I shall speak presently. It implied, as we shall see, that he cast aside authority and considered himself to be capable of founding a new system of thought by his own unaided genius. For a while, however, he had employment which must have occupied much of his time. In 1631 he was invited to return from Paris to superintend the education of the third Earl of Devonshire, the son of his old patron or pupil, now about fourteen years of age. He was beginning to be absorbed in his new studies, but accepted a task which would still leave him some leisure, and to which he thought himself bound by gratitude to the family. He taught the boy industriously, seeking to imbue him "with all such opinions as should incline him to be a good Christian, a good subject, and a good son." The lessons included Latin composition, astronomy, geography, logic, and law. An abstract of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, which appears in his works, was dictated to the pupil in Latin. The boy was docile and intelligent, and in later years revered and protected his teacher. The recall of Hobbes by the countess shows that his discharge had not implied disapproval. In later years the son, upon coming of age, was dissatisfied with some of his mother's dispositions of the estate. Hobbes went into the

matter with the son and helped to arrange terms of agreement. He persuaded the young man to give up the intention of legal proceedings, and to remain in his mother's house. In the document which records the result, he notes that he has not acted for a reward, but simply as discharging the duty of a faithful tutor. To this period belongs a correspondence with another member of the family, William Cavendish, Earl and afterwards Duke of Newcastle, son of a third son of "Bess of Hardwick," and first cousin therefore to the second Earl of Devonshire. The duke's claim to literary glory is founded upon his books upon horsemanship, though he also wrote comedies, and collaborated with his second wife, the famous and eccentric Margaret, in some of her voluminous plays. He was a man of considerable intelligence, who is said to have been a patron of Descartes and Gassendi, as well as of Hobbes. Hobbes writes to him in January 1633 about an expected work from Galileo, which he has endeavoured to procure for the earl in London. Later correspondence shows that Hobbes was employed in elaborating his philosophy and counting upon Newcastle's sympathy.

In 1634 Hobbes started for his third visit to the continent, accompanying his pupil on the usual grand tour. They were at Paris in October, and afterwards visited Italy, returning again to Paris. This tour marks Hobbes's first recognition by philosophical contemporaries. He was at Florence in April 1636, anxious, as he says in a letter, to read Heylin's *History of the Sabbath*, and Selden's *Mare Clausum*. At this time, too, he saw Galileo, who had lately made his famous recantation, and was living near Florence as a

prisoner of the Inquisition. He was admitted to the friendship of the great man, whom he mentions in his books with profound respect. Not long afterwards, Galileo had another remarkable English visitor, John Milton. What he thought of them we unfortunately do not know; but each of them carried away characteristic impressions. During this whole journey Hobbes's mind was always employed upon one topic. Whether he was in a ship or a carriage or on horseback, he was meditating upon the nature of the world, and working out the idea which had struck him at that "meeting of learned men." There was, he held, but one real thing in the world, the basis of all that we falsely take to be things, and which are mere phantasms of the brain. The one reality is motion, and to study the modes of motion is therefore the necessary condition for all successful researches in science. Full of this thought, he reached Paris and communicated it to a remarkable man who approved and brought it to the notice of others.

Hobbes was fortunate in his new acquaintance. Marin Mersenne, a man of his own age, belonged to the Friars Minim of the Franciscan Order, and was living in a monastery near the Place Royale. Before leaving the college of La Flèche he had known Descartes, his junior by eight years, who had entered the same college and already shown his precocity. Some years later the acquaintance was renewed, and Mersenne encouraged Descartes to devote his life to study. He became Descartes's most trusted and ardent friend, and acted as his "plenipotentiary" when Descartes retired to Holland. He accepted his friend's doctrines, defended him against accusations of heterodoxy, attracted dis-

ciples, and effected reconciliations (when possible) with enemies. Mersenne was himself on friendly terms with thinkers of opposite schools. He had some scientific ability, and had lately published a translation of Galileo's *Mechanics*, which made the author's reputation in France. He appears to have been a man of singular simplicity and kindliness of nature, and his cell in the monastery became the place of meeting for the savants of Paris, and for distinguished strangers. He discharged, as Baillet (the biographer of Descartes) put it, the same function in the republic of letters as the heart discharges in the human body. Hobbes says that his cell was preferable to all the schools of philosophers. The star of every art (he becomes quite poetical in his enthusiasm) revolved round Mersenne as the axis of its orbit. The little constellation of shining lights, who in those days were dispelling the old darkness and revealing the foundation of modern science, was widely scattered, and often its component stars were isolated. They had, it is true, the advantage of a common language; but there were no scientific societies or journals, and to facilitate their intercourse, and make each aware of what was being done by others, was a valuable service for which Mersenne was especially qualified. Hobbes was welcomed by him, and began, as he puts it, "to be numbered among the philosophers." He thus received a kind of honorary diploma entitling him to speak with authority. He was not loath to accept the position. That a man who had not seen Euclid till he was forty, and had only taken up philosophy at a later period, should claim before he was fifty to be on terms of equality with the leaders of thought throughout the

whole range of human knowledge would now seem preposterous. But physical science was still in its germ, and philosophy, making a fresh start, was pronouncing study of the old doctrines to be rather an encumbrance than an advantage. The field to be covered was so small that Hobbes, like Bacon or Descartes, might claim to survey the whole intellectual world and lay down the law upon things in general.

Henceforth Hobbes was a man with a mission. He had still to elaborate the details of his creed, but the first principles were already clear to him. Before dealing with his career as the expounder of a philosophy, I may make one remark suggested by his alliance with Mersenne. Hobbes's ethical theories have been condemned as egoistical and cynical; and it might be inferred that these unpleasant qualities were the reflection of his personal character. Of the ethics I shall speak hereafter; but the inference as to character requires, to say the least, very important reservations. It would be altogether unjust to set down Hobbes as a man of cold nature. Whether he was a man to make any romantic sacrifice to friendship may indeed be doubted. Retired philosophers may congratulate themselves that they are seldom exposed to such trials, and in Hobbes's life the case did not occur. But everything goes to show that he was a man of kindly if not of ardent affections. Few men appear to have won so many friends or to have retained them so permanently. His long connection with the Cavendish family proves the existence of a mutual esteem creditable to both sides. His language about Mersenne is as warm and sincere as his language about his early friend the second earl. The friendship with

Mersenne led to an equally warm friendship with Gassendi and with many distinguished men. Hobbes got into plenty of controversies, and the philosopher was assailed more bitterly than any thinker of his time. It is the more remarkable that no serious imputation is made upon the man. Clarendon, when confuting his abominable doctrines, declares that Hobbes was one of his oldest friends, and emphatically asserts the personal esteem entertained by himself and others for his antagonist. Hobbes seems to have been personally attractive to everybody whom he met. He was a pleasant companion, and clearly had wit enough to be acceptable in every circle. But no spiteful sayings are attributed to him, and, although he quarrelled over geometry, he excited no personal antipathy. Certainly we cannot claim for him the posthumous affection which is bestowed upon men of the heroic type like his contemporary Milton, or of the saintly type like Archbishop Leighton. But neither of those eminent persons made any mark in philosophical speculation. We must admit the excellence for its own purpose of more than one type. A man who is above all to be a cool reasoner and to shrink from no conclusion forced upon him by his logic, is a very valuable person, and may be forgiven if his spiritual temperature does not rapidly rise to boiling-point and obscure his clearness of vision. Hobbes, if one may venture to say so, had probably quite as much benevolence as was good for a metaphysician.

Hobbes returned to England in 1637, and began at once to compose his exposition. He was still employed by his pupil, who came of age in 1638, and in 1639 he was helping to arrange matters between the

young earl and his mother. To this time also must be chiefly referred his intercourse with the remarkable group, affectionately commemorated by Clarendon. Its most attractive member was Lord Falkland, who has won the regard of posterity by the charm of his character rather than by any special achievement. He lived at Tew, a few miles from Oxford, and, according to Clarendon's account, kept open house for all the most distinguished members of the university. Among the men who could drop in and make free use of his table and library, were the divines, Sheldon and Morley, afterwards bishops, and Hammond and Chillingworth, who died before the Restoration, while occasional wits and poets came over from London. Whether Hobbes was ever of the party does not appear. Falkland, however, according to Aubrey, was "his great friend and admirer"; and besides Clarendon himself, one who afterwards gave substantial proof of his regard, was Sidney Godolphin, a poet of some reputation. If Hobbes joined the circle, he would not find its opinions altogether congenial. There was not much love lost between him and actual or potential bishops; and Morley, Sheldon, and Hammond would be too strictly orthodox for his taste. Falkland, Chillingworth, and their friend, the "ever memorable" John Hales, represented a rationalising movement within the church, and were suspected of "socinianism." Of one of them, Hobbes made a characteristic remark to Aubrey. He commended Chillingworth for a very great wit: "But, my God," said he (swearing by way of emphasis again), "he is like some lusty fighters that will give a damnable back-blow now and then on their own party!" Chillingworth's

vigorous logic shows an intellect congenial to that of Hobbes himself; but Hobbes would no doubt think that his rationalism logically led to opinions lying beyond the borders of orthodoxy. In politics there was a similar relation. Falkland was taken by Matthew Arnold as embodying the sweet reasonableness which condemns extremes on all sides. We hear him still "ingeminating peace" after swords were drawn—a most amiable but unfortunately a rather futile proceeding. He and Clarendon were constitutionalists, opposed equally to the extreme claims of king and parliament, though when it became necessary to take a side, they preferred the royalist cause. A characteristic passage in the *Behemoth* speaks of the bad advice given by men—Hobbes declines to revive old bitterness by giving their names—who believed in "mixed monarchy," which in reality is pure "anarchy."

Hobbes might be contrasted with Falkland. Though Falkland was moderate enough to see faults on both sides, he was ready to fight and indeed to throw away his life for the side which was least to blame. Hobbes had no doubt upon political or any other questions; but he was quite clear that he would fight for neither side. Fighting, he might fairly urge, had never been his trade, and he was clearly too old to take it up. Meanwhile political controversy was raging with increasing bitterness, and must have occupied the thoughts of every one with whom Hobbes might converse. No doubt eager discussions were going on in the Falkland circle. Hobbes conceived that he had something to say of considerable importance, and probably exaggerated the attention which logic was likely to receive in the disturbed atmosphere.

The exaction of ship-money in 1637 had led to the famous proceedings against Hampden, and the decision against him in 1638. The Scots were becoming restive under the imposition of the new liturgy; they were swearing to the covenant in 1638; and in 1639 a Scottish army was successfully resisting the king, and receiving the sympathy of the popular party in England. Charles was forced to appeal to a parliament in April 1640, after eleven years, during which that troublesome body had been suspended. Men were discussing fundamental political principles, and ready to settle them by an appeal to the sword. It was time, thought Hobbes, to speak out. He had formed and begun to execute a remarkable plan. He intended, like a sound logician, to lay down the first principles of all scientific inquiry, to apply them to what we should now call psychology, setting forth the laws of human nature, and finally to found upon this basis a science corresponding to modern sociology. He now dropped the first part and wrote a little treatise in two sections, omitting the first principles, but giving first a summary of his psychology, and secondly his political doctrine. The treatise was circulated in manuscript and occasioned much talk of the author. Had it not been for the dissolution of the Short Parliament, it would, as he thought, have brought him into danger of his life. The Long Parliament, however, which met in November, ready to fall upon Strafford, might find time also to deal with the author of this treatise.

Hobbes, "doubting how they would use him, went over into France the first of all that fled, and there continued eleven years, to his damage some thousands

of pounds deep." It does not appear how he arrived at this estimate. Few other men would have prided themselves on being the first to run away, and it may be doubted whether it proved, as he apparently thought, his foresight, or implied an erroneous appreciation of the danger. The treatise is undoubtedly a remarkable book, and gives the pith of his most characteristic teaching. Still he avoids so carefully any direct reference to any passing event that it might have failed to attract notice. Hobbes might surely have given credit to members of parliament for sufficient stupidity to overlook logical implications. If indeed they thought him worth punishing, no weak crotchet about liberty of the press would have restrained them. The House of Commons was quite ready to suppress objectionable writers. Hobbes himself says he was preaching the same doctrine as Bishop Manwaring. Manwaring had been a victim of the parliament of 1628, for sermons attributing absolute authority to the king. When the parliament was dissolved the king had pardoned and preferred him, and the Short Parliament found time to fall upon him again and send him to the Tower. Hobbes's treatise argues that the "sovereignty" is one and indivisible, and necessarily carries with it the right to make peace or war and to levy taxes. Sovereignty, as he truly says, was then admitted to be in the king, and it follows that Charles could raise ship-money or whatever taxes he pleased. If parliament were equal to drawing that inference, and thought Hobbes's treatise of sufficient importance, they would have little scruple about applying the arguments directed against Manwaring.

Hobbes's political theory was fully formed before the outbreak of the war. He watched the events with interest, but of course knew beforehand that they would only confirm his theory. That result is sufficiently set forth in the *Behemoth*—a history of the period, written in 1668, to explain the causes of the rebellion. The book has a certain interest at this point in throwing some light upon Hobbes's sympathies when the war was actually raging. Hobbes was not yet a historical philosopher to the point of scientific impartiality. He too often, like many better historians, finds it enough to explain events by the wickedness of the other side. That agreeable theory is an excuse for not attempting to discover the causes of discontent; a wicked man wants no cause. He gives occasionally a quaint enough argument. The king's soldiers were as stout as their enemies, but could not fight so keenly "because their valour was not sharpened so with malice." To this he adds the additional reason that there were many raw London apprentices in the parliamentary army "who would have been fearful enough of death approaching visibly in glistening swords; but, for want of judgment, scarce thought of such death as comes invisibly in a bullet, and therefore were very hardly to be driven out of the field." Hobbes had clearly not been under fire.

He had plenty to say that is more to the purpose, and expressed with his usual terse and pointed style. One line of remark is characteristic. A letter to the Earl of Devonshire, in August 1641, discusses a petition against bishops. Hobbes thinks that it proves the existence of many abuses, and heartily approves

of a proposal to give more authority to the laity. "Ministers," he thinks, "should minister rather than govern." Experience teaches that "the dispute between the spiritual and the civil power has of late, more than anything in the world, been the cause of civil wars in all places of Christendom." He already holds the view which becomes prominent in the *Behemoth*. He starts with a long comparison of the claims of the Papacy and their evil results; only at the end he remembers that, however many crimes the popes may have committed, they are scarcely to be accused of having prompted the Puritan revolt. The Papists, he has to explain, would not be sorry for disorders that might possibly clear the way for the restoring of the pope's authority. The Puritans are most clearly responsible. "After the Bible was translated in English, every man, nay every boy and woman, thought they spoke with God Almighty and understood what He said, when by a certain number of chapters a day they had read the Scriptures once or twice over." They lost their reverence for the bishops, and were supported by the gentry, who desired popular government in civil matters as non-conformists did in ecclesiastical. Thus supported, the presbyterian preachers went on to declaim against tyranny. They played the part of "right godly men as skilfully as any tragedian in the world." They took care indeed not to inveigh against the lucrative vices, such as lying, cozening, and hypocrisy, "which was a great ease to the generality of citizens and the inhabitants of market towns, and no little profit to themselves." "The inhabitants of market towns" were already fertile in the Stigginses of the period. Hobbes detests

the Presbyterians more than the Independents; for the Presbyterian claimed a spiritual authority over the State for his own church; still his preaching led to the multiplication of sects. "There was no so dangerous an enemy to the Presbyterians as this brood of their own hatching." The Rump, he observes, voted liberty of conscience to the sectaries and so "plucked out the sting of presbytery," a feat which was personally useful to Hobbes himself. Meanwhile the established church had its faults. The clergy in general thought that the pulling down of the pope was the setting up "of them in his place." Their doctrine of apostolical succession implied that their "spiritual power did depend not upon the authority of the king but of Christ himself." He admits that Laud was a "very honest man," but intimates that he was a very poor statesman for mixing state affairs with his "squabblings in the university about free will, and his standing upon punctilios concerning the service book and its rubrics."

Though an absolutist in politics, Hobbes can cordially denounce persecution. "A state can constrain obedience but convince no error, nor alter the mind of them that think they have the better reason. Suppression of doctrines does but unite and exasperate: that is, increase both the malice and the power of them that have already believed them." Persecution results from the desire of the spiritual power to enforce the dogmatic systems learnt in the schools. "Religion has been generally taken for the same thing with divinity [that is, with metaphysical theology], to the great advantage of the clergy." Though the translation of the Bible did mischief, he approves of it on the

whole. The Bible teaches good morality in the easiest words. The mischief resulted from the use of the Scriptures in controversies over mysteries. It is only when the State is subordinate to the Church that abstract dogmas will be enforced by law, and it is only in Christian countries that there have been wars of religion, because there men have been encouraged to wrangle and harangue upon such points. The introduction of this scholastic dogmatism is a main count in his indictment against the universities. "The universities have been to this nation as the wooden horse was to the Trojans." They are the "core of rebellion." It might have been said that the revival of classical literature was a point in their favour. But that only suggests another charge. They taught men to argue "for liberty out of the works of Aristotle, Plato, Cicero, and Seneca, and out of the histories of Rome and Greece"—not, it would seem, paying proper attention to Thucydides. Things will never be well till they are reformed and made to teach absolute obedience to the laws of the king "and his public edicts under the great seal of England": that is, as one of his opponents sneered, till the *Leviathan* has become the accepted text-book.

Hobbes on reaching Paris had renewed his old relations with Mersenne, and his first bit of work was a return to purely philosophical activity. Descartes had published his famous treatise on *Method* in 1637, and was now about to follow it up by the *Meditations*. Mersenne had submitted the book before publication to various learned men who were to offer criticisms which, with Descartes's replies, might be expected to throw light upon any obscurities in the new system.

Hobbes came just in time to join in this operation. He put certain objections briefly and bluntly, and they are of much interest as illustrating his own relation to Descartes. But they did not answer the intended purpose. Descartes had expected, and he more or less received from others, the rare and useful kind of criticism which comes from thinkers who are sufficiently in sympathy with their author to draw from him additional explanations of his thought and help him to round off and perfect his exposition. But Hobbes differed radically. The controversy very rapidly reached the point at which flat contradiction takes the place of friendly argument, and Descartes did not like contradiction for its own sake any more than any other philosopher. Instead of a partial ally he found a dogged opponent, and one who thought himself entitled to speak with fully equal authority. Descartes naturally became convinced that Hobbes was a very poor philosopher. There was not, he said, a single sound conclusion in the objections. Matters did not improve when Mersenne forwarded to Descartes certain objections to his *Dioptrique*. In order to secure a fair hearing, Mersenne concealed the fact that these objections also were made by Hobbes. Descartes did not suspect the little artifice, but did not like the new objections any better. He would, he said, have nothing more to do with the Englishman. At a later period Descartes admitted that Hobbes was a more competent writer upon political problems than upon metaphysical and mathematical questions, although his political principles were morally objectionable. He held that all men were wicked and gave them ground for wickedness. Hobbes on his side, according

to Aubrey, had a "high respect" for Descartes, but thought that "his head did not lie for philosophy": he ought to have confined himself to geometry. He could not pardon him for writing against his conscience in defence of "transubstantiation in order to please the Jesuits." This unsatisfactory encounter did not long detain Hobbes. His interest in the political issues of the civil war continued, and his thoughts were for ten years "much or almost altogether unhinged from the mathematics." The first result of his meditations was the *De Cive* (1642), which is substantially a remodelling of the political part of the "little treatise." It was written in Latin, by way apparently of implying that it was intended for the philosophical world of Europe, and only a small number of copies was printed.

Hobbes then began the composition of his most famous work, the *Leviathan*. This time he used his native language, and meant, it is to be presumed, to catch the attention of the politicians who were remoulding the constitution of his own country. The *Leviathan*, like the early treatise, covers the second and third parts of his general plan, the first principles being again postponed. It is always easy to supply first principles when you have settled your conclusions. One characteristic may be noted. In the first treatise he had asserted his principle of the subordination of the Church to the State. This argument, however, was greatly expanded in the *De Cive*, and now in the *Leviathan* fills a still larger space. For whatever reason, Hobbes's antipathy to the claims of the spiritual powers, whether Catholic or Presbyterian, had been growing in intensity. The *Leviathan*, which Hobbes

hoped, and not without reason, would make an epoch in political speculation, was carefully and slowly written. Aubrey describes his method. "He walked much and contemplated; and he had in the head of his staff a pen and ink horn; carried always a note-book in his pocket, and as soon as a thought darted, he presently entered it into his book, or otherwise he might perhaps have lost it. He had drawn the design of the book into chapters, etc., so that he knew whereabouts it would come in." The composition took some years, during which, one would suppose, Hobbes must have been often in financial straits. Mersenne's failure to bring him into friendly relations with Descartes did not prevent the continuance of his own friendship. Another conspicuous member of the Mersenne circle, held to be only second to Descartes, was Gassendi. He settled in Paris as professor of mathematics in 1645, and became a warm friend. Hobbes called Gassendi the "sweetest-natured man in the world," and Gassendi expressed the highest admiration for Hobbes's writings. A less distinguished acquaintance, Sorbière, was rather a hanger-on than a member of the circle. He wrote books upon medical topics, and vainly tried to get patronage from the pope for his conversion from protestant error, but neither the pope nor other observers seem to have considered him as particularly edifying. Meanwhile he boasted of his friendship for Gassendi, whose life he wrote. He also professed admiration for Hobbes, who allowed him to publish a definitive edition of the *De Cive* at Amsterdam. It was delayed until 1647, when it came out accompanied by two most enthusiastic letters of commendation from his friends Mer-

senne and Gassendi. Of one other friend and warm admirer we know little. This was Du Verdus, a noble of Languedoc. They had become so intimate that Hobbes was about to give up all hopes of returning to England, and to settle with Du Verdus in the country, when a new career seemed to open for him on the arrival of the Prince of Wales in Paris.

English refugees had been following the first fugitive. The Cavendish family had taken the royalist side. Hobbes's pupil, the third earl, had been impeached in 1642, and escaped to the continent. He returned to England in 1645, submitted to the parliament, and lived in retirement at Latimers in Buckinghamshire till the Restoration. His younger brother, Charles, had distinguished himself on the king's side at Edgehill, but was killed in an encounter with Cromwell in 1643. Their mother, Christiana, remained in England, and her house was a meeting-place of the royalist party, by whom she was fully trusted. Their cousin, the Earl of Newcastle, commanded the king's forces in the north, and when his army, then led by Prince Rupert, was crushed at Marston Moor, he left England and reached Paris in the spring of 1645. He stayed there three years, and his presence was, no doubt, important to Hobbes. His wife repeats a conversation between them, at which Newcastle spoke sceptically of witchcraft, and, according to her, suggested a passage to the same effect in the *Leviathan*. Possibly the lady was claiming a little too much for her husband. Bramhall, Bishop of Derry, had escaped with Newcastle, and had a discussion with Hobbes about free will at the house of the marquis (as he had now become). Each of the disputants

afterwards put his arguments in writing; but Hobbes desired that his paper should be kept private. He had allowed a copy to be taken for a friend, which was afterwards published without his consent, with results to be presently noticed. Edmund Waller told Aubrey that he had met Hobbes, Gassendi, and Descartes dining together at the marquis's table in Paris. With the marquis at this time was his brother, Sir Charles Cavendish, who had been prevented by deformity from bearing arms, and had taken to mathematics. He collected, says Aubrey, as many mathematical MSS. as filled a hogshead, intending to publish them. But he died "of the scurvy contracted by hard study," and his papers, falling into ignorant hands, were sold by weight to the pasteboard makers. Petty mentions Hobbes's kindness in introducing him to the two brothers. Petty, most versatile and ingenious of men, was thirty-five years younger than Hobbes. He was precocious from childhood, and at this juncture was in Paris with an introduction to Hobbes from the English mathematician Pell. Petty helped Hobbes by drawing figures for his optical propositions; and the two joined in reading Vesalius's anatomy. Petty was soon afterwards lecturing on anatomy at Oxford. The economic writings by which he is remembered show marked traces of Hobbes's political influence. About this time, 1646, Clarendon, writing at Jersey on his way to Holland, sent a message to Hobbes asking for the *De Cive*, and told him that their common friend, Sidney Godolphin, slain at Chagford in the beginning of 1645, had left him a bequest of £200. Hobbes received £100, with a promise of the rest from

Godolphin's brother, to whom, though personally unknown, he dedicated the *Leviathan* in gratitude. At the end of the book he makes a striking reference to his friend. "I have known clearness of judgment and largeness of fancy, strength of reason and graceful elocution, a courage for the war and a fear for the laws and all eminently in one man; and that was my most noble and honoured friend, Mr. Sidney Godolphin, who, hating no man, nor hated of any, was unfortunately slain in the beginning of the late civil war, in the public quarrel, by an undiscerned and undiscerning hand." The bequest must have been welcome. It was not so easy to make communications or send remittances, and Hobbes only heard of his legacy by the accident of Clarendon's letter, some little time after Godolphin's death. The Cavendishes had plenty of calls upon their money, and had other things to think of than Hobbes's fortunes.

The gathering of the exiles at Paris naturally led to Hobbes's appointment to be mathematical tutor to the Prince of Wales. It was, we may suppose, not a very splendid post if regarded from a pecuniary point of view. Newcastle had been for a time the prince's 'governor," and had drawn up a paper of instructions, superfluously advising that the boy should not be too devout, "and should be very civil to women." He might now naturally recommend his friend Hobbes, whose qualifications were indeed ample. Mersenne had published some of his scientific speculations. Pell had at this time confuted one Longomontanus, who claimed to have squared the circle; and Hobbes was invited along with Descartes and other leading mathematicians, including Sir Charles Cavendish, to

pronounce an opinion upon the controversy. How far he succeeded in impressing the prince with his reverence for Euclid does not appear. At a later time the conjunction was regarded as fraught with disastrous consequences. Burnet scented a diabolical plot. The Duke of Buckingham, such was the suggestion, desired to corrupt Charles's morals and principles. Buckingham would be in no need of help in the moral department, but he introduced Hobbes to inculcate "political and religious schemes," which made a deep impression upon the pupil, "so that the main blame of the King's ill principles and bad morals, was owing to the Duke of Buckingham." As a matter of fact, Hobbes states in a letter to Sorbière that he was confined to mathematical teaching, the prince being too young for philosophy. It would be more plausible to attribute to his influence Charles's most creditable peculiarity—a certain interest in science. Ill principles were abundant enough in the atmosphere of the court. The connection lasted at most for two years, as Charles came to Paris in 1646, and left it for Holland in the spring of 1648. He retained, however, a friendly feeling for his tutor. The new edition of the *De Cive* was now on the point of publication, and Sorbière, in 1647, proposed to describe Hobbes on the title-page as tutor to the Prince of Wales. Hobbes objected in a remarkable letter. The connection of the writer may do harm to the prince, as suggesting that he approves Hobbes's principles. Courtiers may accuse him of vanity. Finally he may think of returning to England if peace is established in any way. He did not, he said, belong to the household, and apparently found it already uncongenial.

Hobbes's teachership was interrupted, if not terminated, by a severe illness which brought him to the point of death in 1647. He gives a characteristic anecdote in regard to it. Mersenne was called in by a common friend, who feared that Hobbes would die outside of the Roman communion. Mersenne accordingly came and began a discourse upon the power of his church to remit sins. "Father," said Hobbes, "I have long gone over that question in my own mind. You have something pleasanter to say. When did you see Gassendi?" Mersenne dropped the subject. Soon afterwards Cosin, afterwards Bishop of Durham, offered his services, and Hobbes received the sacrament from him according to the Anglican rite: a great proof, he observes, of his reverence for the episcopal discipline. Aubrey gives a very different version of the story. When divines came to him in this illness, he said, "Let me alone, or else I will detect all your cheats from Aaron to yourselves." But Hobbes's own account must be preferred. Mersenne died in September 1648, after great suffering under the hands of blundering surgeons. Hobbes continued to work at his political writings. In 1650 he published or allowed the publication of the little treatise which had remained for ten years in manuscript, and in 1651 he published an English translation of the *De Cive*. The poet Waller had offered to translate it before, but having asked Hobbes to translate part by way of model, declined to undertake a task which, as he sensibly judged, could be executed by no one so well as the author himself. These two books were forerunners of the *Leviathan*, which was printed in London, and appeared in the middle of 1651. In August

Hobbes had another illness, of which the shrewd and learned physician, Gui Patin, gives a lively account. He was called in to see Hobbes, whom he describes as stoical, melancholy, and *outre cela Anglais*. Naturally, therefore, he had been thinking of suicide; Englishmen have a turn that way. He refused to be bled: the remedy for almost all diseases according to Patin. Next day, however, he gave in, to his great benefit. They at once became *camarades et grands amis*; and Patin allowed him to drink as much small beer as he liked. Hobbes was in the habit of saying that he would prefer an old woman who had been at many bedsides to the "learnedst young unpractised physitian." The fate of his friend Mersenne may have weakened his faith in the faculty. Two months after his recovery Charles reached Paris after his final defeat at Worcester, and Hobbes speedily presented him with a manuscript copy of the *Leviathan*, "engrossed in vellum in a marvellous fair hand." It is now to be seen in the British Museum.

The immediate consequence was that Hobbes had to retreat to England, and became the object of accusations which require notice, not because they are plausible but because they illustrate his position at the time. Wallis, in a controversy with Hobbes after the Restoration, declared that the *Leviathan* was "writ in defence of Oliver's title." Clarendon reports that he talked with Hobbes shortly before the book was published. Hobbes showed him some sheets and spoke of his opinions. Clarendon asked how he could publish such doctrine? After a "discourse between jest and earnest," Hobbes replied: "The truth is I have a mind to go home." Conver-

sations between jest and earnest reported twenty years later are unsatisfactory evidence, and it is more likely that the grave Clarendon failed to see a joke than that Hobbes meant to make such a confession. To Wallis he made a sufficient answer. Cromwell did not become protector till 1653, and it could not be known in 1650 that he was the right person to flatter. But besides this the argument of the *Leviathan* was certainly not modified in order to please either Cromwell or the Rump, to which for the present he was subordinate. The principles are identical with those of the early treatise and the *De Cive* written long before; and since they were not modified at all, they were not modified in order to curry favour with anybody. Things, it is true, had changed, and it might be suggested that the defence of the absolute power of the sovereign was applicable to parliament, when it became sovereign, as it had once been applicable to the king. But parliament would certainly not admit that only by success were its claims justified, or approve of a doctrine which condemned the whole rebellion. In any case it is scarcely fair to blame Hobbes, who laid down a perfectly consistent doctrine from first to last, if a change of circumstances made the doctrine agreeable to a new order. The truth is, I take it, that his view was one which could not be openly avowed even by Cromwellians or by royalists. The more they might act in accordance with it, the more anxious they would be to disavow it.

There was, however, one part of the *Leviathan* which might be a stumbling-block. In a *Review and Conclusion* he briefly considered the question,

at what time does a subject become obliged to a conqueror? He answers that "it is when the means of his life are within the guards and garrisons of the enemy." Submission, therefore, to a *de facto* government is right; and Hobbes adds that such submission is not even an assistance to the new power, which would otherwise confiscate an opponent's whole property instead of taking a part. This was a convenient argument. In 1656 Hobbes could take credit for the influence of the *Leviathan* in framing "the minds of a thousand gentlemen to a conscientious obedience to the present government [Cromwell's], which otherwise would have wavered in that point." In 1662 he looks at the question from the other point of view, and remembers that by "compounding" they diminished the plunder of the usurper, and in due time would be better able to serve the king. That was the case of many honourable persons, including it may be observed, Hobbes's own patron the Earl of Devonshire. No moralist, I suppose, would deny that such submission becomes right in time. Nobody could blame an elderly scholar, who had no position under the exiled king, for settling down quietly in his native country and justifying the same action in his friend's case. No doubt, however, the doctrine gave offence to those who held out. "Mr. Hobbes," writes Sir Edward Nicholas in February 1652, 'is at London much caressed as one that hath by his writings justified the reasonableness and righteousness of their arms and actions." Hobbes had certainly not done that; but the royalist might be scandalised when an eminent writer, who had previously been the king's

tutor, defended submission to the powers in existence, and so far admitted the cause to be hopeless. How far he was "caressed" does not appear. He certainly got nothing from the government, and he had very sufficient reasons for leaving France.

Nicholas was then in Holland and previous notes of his are significant. "All honest men here," he says in January, "are very glad that the K. hath at length banished from his court that father of atheists, Mr. Hobbes, who, it is said, hath rendered all the queen's court, and very many of the D. of York's family atheists, and if he had been suffered, would have done his best to have likewise poisoned the king's court." A very few days later he regrets that Papists "(to the shame of the true Protestants) were the chief cause that that grand atheist was sent away." He mentions, but declines to believe, a report that the Marquis of Ormonde was very slow in signifying the king's command to Hobbes to forbear coming to court. Clarendon, who seems to have had some part in the expulsion, had now read the printed book and told Hobbes that "such a book would be punished in any country in Europe." He says that Hobbes had to "fly secretly, the justices having endeavoured to apprehend him." Hobbes himself says that the Anglican prelates had found fault with the theology of his book, and that he was in fear of the Catholic clergy, whose church he had certainly attacked. Whether Hobbes could rightly be called an atheist is a question to be noticed hereafter. His friend Mersenne had declared some years before that there were some 50,000 atheists in Paris alone, and that twelve might be often found in one

house. As there was no religious census at the time the numbers must be considered as distinctly conjectural. "Atheism," however, is a word which could be and was used simply as a missile to be hurled at anybody morally or philosophically objectionable. Both Hobbes's friends, Gassendi and Mersenne, were Catholic ecclesiastics who discharged their functions regularly, and Gassendi maintained that his admiration for Epicurus was consistent with thorough orthodoxy. Hobbes can hardly have talked atheism to them, and the anecdote about Mersenne and Bishop Cosin, to which he refers so complacently, seems to imply that he was as reticent as might be expected from his timidity. Perhaps he had been more outspoken among the courtiers, and, at any rate, the attacks upon the spiritual power in his two last books meant an attitude towards the Church which might well suggest "atheism," as Mersenne understood the word, even to candid critics. Certainly he had said enough to shock the Catholic authorities, and his fear of their action was natural. Besides this, he tells us that he was frightened by the murder of the two English envoys in Holland and Spain, Dorislaus and Ascham. He was in an awkward position. Charles, he admits, was set against him. The young king "trusted in those in whom his father had trusted," says Hobbes. Hobbes was hardly called upon to stay in a place where his countrymen and the native authorities agreed in considering him to be an atheist, and held atheism to be not only damnable but criminal.

He was glad to escape to England in a severe winter, and suffering from his infirmities, and to

settle among old friends in a land where he was at least permitted to publish his writings. Three months later (as he declared) he went more than a mile to take the sacrament according to the Anglican rite. He made his submission to the Council of State and remained for the rest of his life in England. In 1653 he again became a member of the Earl of Devonshire's family. The earl, though living in retirement at Latimers in Buckinghamshire, also occupied "Little Salisbury House" in London. Hobbes complained that, although the earl had a good library and provided his old tutor with all the books he wanted, a country life gave small opportunities for "learned conversation." One's understanding, Aubrey said, as Johnson might have said, "grows mouldy." He appears to have spent most of his time in London, and, as at all periods of his life, cultivated the friendship of his most distinguished contemporaries. He was on intimate terms with the best known poets, Waller, Cowley, and Davenant. Milton would not be a congenial friend. In his last year at Paris he had been very intimate with Davenant, who was then writing the first cantos of his ponderous epic *Gondibert*. He submitted it as it was written to Hobbes, and addressed a very long preface to his friendly critic. Hobbes replied in a letter which was printed as an appendix to the preface. It is superfluous to say that each expresses a very high opinion of the other's merits. I need not dwell upon Hobbes's æsthetic doctrine. "A poet," he says, "ought to know well, and to know much": a sign of the first is "perspicuity, propriety, and decency"; a sign of the second is "novelty of expression, which pleaseth by excitation

of the mind, for novelty causeth admiration and admiration curiosity, which is a delightful appetite of knowledge." He ends by a spirited protest against Davenant's depreciation of old age as second childhood. "That saying, meant only of the weakness of the body, was wrested to the weakness of mind by froward children, weary of the controlment of their parents, masters, and other admonitors." The dotage of age is "never the effect of time but sometimes of the excesses of youth." "Those who pass their youth in making provision only for their ease and sensual delight are children still at what years soever: as they that coming into a populous city, never going out of their inn, are strangers still, how long soever they have been there." There is, moreover, "no reason for any man to think himself wiser to-day than yesterday, which does not equally convince he shall be wiser to-morrow than to-day." Davenant will love to change his opinion when he becomes old, and "meanwhile you discredit all I have said before in your commendation because I am old already." Hobbes was not quite sixty-two when he wrote this and was to live nearly thirty years longer. He did his best to act up to his encouraging but rather questionable doctrine, and took the approach of old age with all possible gallantry. Old age was then considered to begin at a comparatively early period, and Hobbes, in spite of the antagonism which he excited, enjoyed some of its privileges. Cowley's ode to him written some years later touches the point:

> "Nor can the snow which now cold age does shed,
> Upon thy reverend head

Quench or allay the noble fires within,
But all which thou hast been
And all that youth can be thou 'rt yet,
So fully still dost thou
Enjoy the manhood and the bloom of wit
And all the natural heat but not the fever too."

A phenomenon which is accounted for in the familiar lines:

"To things immortal time can do no wrong,
And that which never is to die for ever must be young."

Cowley says that the scholastic philosophy, of which, as his poems show he had made some study, was now dead, and that Hobbes is the great "Columbus of the golden land of new philosophies." Hobbes's three poetical friends had probably all known him in France. Waller had an unfortunate facility for turning his coat, and came back about the same time as Hobbes; he was pardoned and then patronised by Cromwell, and afterwards reconciled himself to Charles II. Davenant finished his *Gondibert* in the Tower, but was afterwards allowed to revive theatrical performances before the Restoration. Cowley, who had been trusted in confidential employment by Henrietta Maria, was suspected, like Hobbes, of a disposition to reconcile himself to the actual authorities, but seems to have been a consistent royalist.

Hobbes had two other remarkable friends. One was Harvey (1578-1657) whose great discovery of the circulation of the blood had been first published in 1616, and of whom Hobbes always speaks with profound admiration. Harvey is said to have left him £10 in his will.[1] The other was John Selden (1584-

[1] Aubrey reports that Selden, like Harvey, left £10 to his friend, but this seems to be an error.

1654). Their acquaintance began by Hobbes sending him a copy of the *Leviathan*, after which, says Aubrey, there was a strict friendship between them. The conversations between the authors of the *Leviathan* and the *Table Talk* would no doubt be worth hearing, and Selden's Erastian views would be thoroughly acceptable to Hobbes. Baxter, however, reports on the authority of Sir Matthew Hale, that Selden attacked Hobbes's sceptical opinions so forcibly as to drive him out of the room. Another of Aubrey's stories is that Hobbes dissuaded Selden from sending for a clergyman when he was dying. "What," he is supposed to have said, "will you that have wrote like a man now die like a woman?" As a contradictory account is given of Selden's death, and as Hobbes certainly acted on the opposite principle when he was himself in danger, we may probably assume that the anecdote represents not what actually happened, but what somebody thought would naturally be done by an "atheist."

Meanwhile Hobbes was, as he says, in a country where every one might write what he pleased. Free from fear of priests and with some gratitude to sectaries, he could sit down to finish his philosophy. He had sufficiently expounded his political theories, and they were provoking some controversy. Filmer (best known from Locke's attack upon his posthumous book, the *Patriarcha*) criticised Hobbes in 1652, along with Grotius and Milton. Alexander Ross, whose memory is preserved only by a rhyme in Hudibras as to the "philosopher who had read Alexander Ross over," animadverted on the *Leviathan* next year. But they were opponents who might be neglected by a writer who had now achieved so high a position.

Hobbes sat down to finish his work by completing the exposition of first principles, from which he had been distracted by his interest in the parliamentary struggle.

He was presently interrupted. The anonymous person to whom he had entrusted a copy of his discussion with Bramhall was now induced to publish the piece in which, as he said in a preface, the author of the *Leviathan* had solved a question over which divines had wrangled so long and so fruitlessly. Bramhall naturally supposed that Hobbes, who had stipulated at the time for privacy, was responsible for the publication. He therefore published all that had passed with his rejoinder to Hobbes. Hobbes replied in 1658, and Bramhall two years afterwards came out with *Castigation of Mr. Hobbes's Animadversions*, together with an appendix called *The Catching of Leviathan the Great Whale*. This was meant to expose the atheistical doctrine embodied in Hobbes's chief work. Bramhall died in 1663, and Hobbes, who declares that he had not heard of the attack for ten years, now made a reply which did not appear till after his own death. The controversy brought out some of Hobbes's most vigorous writing, and gives an important part of his philosophy, of which I shall have to speak hereafter. Hobbes meanwhile had finished the book which was to give the foundations of his system. It was published in Latin as *De Corpore* in 1655. An English translation (only superintended by himself) appeared in 1656.

This book contains a very important exposition of Hobbes's general principles. It also includes certain very unfortunate speculations which led to one of the most singular tangles of controversy in which a philo-

sopher ever wasted his energies. I have already noted Hobbes's condemnation of the universities, which had found sufficient expression in the *Leviathan*. According to him, they still taught nothing but the old scholasticism, corrupted youth by classical republicanism, and were ignorant of modern science. He was not aware, it seems, of the remarkable change which had come over his own university. In 1619 Sir Henry Savile had founded professorships of geometry and astronomy. Until that time, according to Hobbes, many people regarded geometry as "art diabolical," and its professors, as Wood says, were taken to be "limbs of the devil." Mathematical studies were now gaining respect, and by the time of Hobbes's return to England, Oxford had become the meeting-place of a remarkable number of eminent and energetic teachers. Never before—perhaps one might add, not often afterwards—was the university so important a focus of scientific illumination. Oxford (alternately with London) was the headquarters of the remarkable group of men who founded the Royal Society after the Restoration. Young men destined to become famous, Robert Boyle and Christopher Wren and Hobbes's friend, Petty, and others less generally known, were of the number. Boyle, the eldest of the three, was thirty-nine years and Wren forty-four years younger than Hobbes. They represented the new generation, eager to enter into that promised land of science of which Bacon had caught "a Pisgah sight." The two Savilian professors, both some years older, were men of mark. Seth Ward (1617-1689) had been appointed professor of astronomy in 1649, though previously ejected from Cambridge for refusing the covenant. He was already

known as an able mathematician, though after the Restoration he left science to rise in the Church and become ultimately Bishop of Salisbury. John Wallis (1618-1703), the professor of geometry from 1649, was a man of singular acuteness, and one of the first mathematicians of his day. His *Arithmetica Infinitorum*, published in 1655, was the greatest step towards the development of the differential calculus, elaborated by Newton and Leibnitz in the next generation. Oxford while represented by such men could certainly not be condemned as behind the time in science. Hobbes, who specially claimed to represent the scientific movement, should have recognised the men who were its most efficient organs. Unluckily for him things fell out very differently. Ward replied to Hobbes in an appendix to a book mainly directed against another assailant of the universities.[1] In an earlier essay he had professed a high opinion of that "worthy gentleman," Hobbes; but he now felt bound to expose the worthy gentleman's arrogance and ignorance. Backed by a letter from the famous John Wilkins, at this time warden of Wadham, and afterwards the first secretary of the Royal Society, he accused Hobbes of plagiarism, and taunted him in advance. Whenever Hobbes published his geometrical discoveries (of which he had apparently been boasting) he would find that they were only too well understood at Oxford.

These discoveries saw the light in the *De Corpore*. Hobbes had squared the circle: and though the sub-

[1] John Webster, known also from his *Displaying of Supposed Witchcraft* (1677), directed against Henry More and other credulous persons: and not the famous dramatist, as others have had to prove.

ject was strictly irrelevant, he could not refrain from introducing a chapter into his book by way of showing his capacity. He had solved the problem which had baffled all previous geometers from Archimedes downward. No man ever made a more unlucky boast. Ward and Wallis agreed to make an example of the rash intruder who had given himself into their hands. Ward wrote against the general philosophy; in that department nothing could be done beyond repeating familiar arguments. Wallis, who undertook the mathematics, had a more satisfactory task. Mathematical controversies have the peculiarity that they lead to definite issues, in which one side must be entirely in the right, and the other entirely in the wrong. Hobbes had or had not squared the circle, and his success or failure could be clearly demonstrated to all competent people. As a matter of fact, of course, he had failed egregiously. Not only so, but he had made successive attempts; falling out of one blunder into another, he had left traces of the process by cancelling sheets, and he had shown a strange incapacity for even appreciating the conditions of strict mathematical proof. All this Wallis explained in an *Elenchus Geometriæ Hobbianæ*, adding reproof and ridicule to poison the wound to his victim's vanity. Hobbes was too incompetent even to know that he had been refuted. With a courage worthy of a better cause he defended his own errors, and gave fresh proofs of incapacity by attacking Wallis's real discoveries in *Six Lessons* for the Oxford professors. Wallis in return gave *Due Correction for Mr. Hobbes in School Discipline for not saying his Lessons right.* The language became worse, and diverged into irrelevant topics. Wallis charged Hobbes with

confusing the Greek words Στιγμή and Στίγμα. Hobbes's next book was therefore headed "Στιγμαὶ Ἀγεωμετρίας, Ἀγροικίας, Ἀντιπολιτείας, Ἀμαθείας *or Marks of the absurd Geometry, Rural Language, Scottish Church Politics, and Barbarisms of John Wallis.*"

When the Royal Society was founded, 1662, Hobbes was naturally not invited to join a body of which his antagonists were leading members. He showed his anger by attacking Boyle's account of his experiment with the air-pump. He often said that if people who tried such a farrago of experiments were to be called philosophers, the title might be bestowed upon apothecaries and gardeners and the like. Besides stating that the Society was on the wrong tack and would learn nothing till they adopted his principles, he indulged in a personal fling at Wallis. Wallis replied in the *Hobbius Heauton Timoroumenos*, which seems to have been the most complete exposure of Hobbes's manifold blunders. It gave Hobbes, however, his one telling retort. Wallis made the accusation of disloyalty already noticed. Hobbes defended himself, and pointed out that Wallis had deciphered the king's despatches taken after Naseby, and had boasted of the fact. If Wallis now said (as he seems to have done) that he did it to the king's advantage, that would only show that he cheated his employer, excused treason with treachery, and was a double spy. To this awkward thrust Wallis did not reply. But it did not prove that Hobbes had squared the circle.

The battle was not yet ended. Four years later (1666) Hobbes came out with a new treatise, in which he admitted that all geometers were against him; either he alone must be mad or he alone not mad;

unless indeed they were all mad together. He was now seventy-eight, but still wrote treatises to which Wallis punctually replied until 1672, when Hobbes was eighty-four. Wallis then dropped off, but Hobbes published yet another treatise in 1674, and fired a final shot called the *Decameron Physiologicum* in 1678, at the ripe age of ninety.[1]

There is something pathetic as well as comical in this singular history. Hobbes told Sorbière in 1656 that he attacked the professors mainly because they represented the clergy and universities. That was a very bad reason for assaulting his opponents' strongest side. The old gentleman certainly wasted a great deal of time and temper, and showed an amazing degree of self-confidence. Still he was near seventy when the fight began, and to a man of that age something should be forgiven for intellectual energy, even in a mistaken cause. One remark may, I suppose, be made. A man who attempted circle-squaring at a later period proved himself to be hopelessly at sea. Many such adventurers are described in De Morgan's very amusing *Budget of Paradoxes.* But in Hobbes's day the enterprise was not so clearly perceived to be hopeless. He was called in, as we have seen, to

[1] A full account of this controversy is given in Croom Robertson's *Hobbes*, pp. 167-185. I have been content to follow him, and have not even seen Wallis's pamphlets which have become rare, as he declined to print them in his works after Hobbes's death. Robertson was far more competent than I could be to give an opinion upon the merits of a controversy which in any case would not deserve any lengthy discussion in the present book. Dr. Tönnies thinks Robertson rather hard upon Hobbes, and unjust to the historical significance of this controversy.

arbitrate in one case of circle-squaring, and his friend Mersenne had a controversy about the same time with the Jesuit, St. Vincent, "the best of circle-squarers." To square the circle, or in other words to find the ratio of the radius to the circumference, was of course a rational problem, though, I suppose, that the proper treatment could not be applied till the development of the methods adopted by Wallis, and so unfortunately misunderstood by Hobbes. He persistently protested against the application of algebra to geometry: that is, against the most essential step in advance that was being made in his day. He consequently made an attempt in which failure was inevitable. De Morgan, however, seems to feel a certain compunction in classing him with the circle-squarers, and says, that in spite of his blunders he shows great ability in his remarks upon the general theory of mathematical reasoning.

The moral is, I suppose, that a man ought to read Euclid before he is forty. He will assimilate the principles better, and he will also be made aware of the danger of mistaking blunders for original discoveries. That is an error of which he will be cured by examiners. Anyhow, besides wasting his energy, Hobbes had put himself in a curiously uncomfortable position by the time of the Restoration. Intellectual audacity combines awkwardly with personal timidity. The poor old gentleman, aged seventy-two, whose great aim was to keep out of harm's way, had stirred up an amazing mass of antipathies. His political absolutism was hateful to constitutionalists like Clarendon as well as to the more popular politicians: to the two parties, that is, which were about to become

tories and whigs. Anglican bishops and non-conformist divines agreed that he was an atheist, and, what was to some almost as bad, a hater of all ecclesiastical authority. His political views might suit the courtiers, but no one could be more hostile to their leanings to Rome. Political absolutism and religious scepticism made a creed which could not be openly avowed, though it might and did excite some tacit sympathy. He had, however, spoken with a certain authority as a representative of science. Now the scientific and philosophical world had ostracised him. They had pronounced him to be a charlatan. A man who could make such a mess of squaring the circle was presumably a paradox-monger in philosophy. His opponents would taunt him with a failure admitted by every one but himself. It is true that popular opinion looks upon philosophers with a dash of amused contempt. Like Shakespeare's fools they are allowed a certain license. Their queer opinions, even if atrocious, are so far removed from practical business as to be harmless and rather amusing playthings. Personally Hobbes was generally agreeable; and so venerable in appearance that one would prefer to leave him in quiet. He had some anxious moments, but on the whole was tolerated.

Hobbes had spent the winter of 1659 in Derbyshire, when Aubrey wrote to beg him to be present at the king's arrival in London. Hobbes was standing at the gates of Little Salisbury House as his majesty's coach drove through the Strand. Charles recognised his old tutor, took off his hat and greeted him kindly. A week afterwards Hobbes attended when Charles was sitting for his

portrait to the famous miniature painter, Samuel Cooper, and diverted the sitter by his "pleasant discourse." Charles gave orders that he should always have access to the court—the royal taste was good in the matter of "wit and sharp repartees." When Hobbes appeared, the king would say: "Here comes the bear to be baited"; and the courtiers did their best. Hobbes feared none of them, being "marvellous happy and ready in his replies." He took care, however, to avoid serious topics. During the following period, Hobbes spent most of his time in London. Our next glimpse of him is given by the French ambassador, the Comte de Cominges. Louis XIV. had at this time resolved to become the patron of learned men throughout Europe. Cominges was directed to inquire what men worthy of this exalted patronage were to be found in England. He made the discouraging reply that arts and sciences had chosen France as their sole abode. In England men still remembered Bacon, Sir Thomas More, and Buchanan, but the only living author of reputation was "*un nommé Miltonius*": an infamous person whose writings would not be to the taste of the great king. Shortly afterwards he discovered Hobbes, and invited him to dinner along with the famous mathematician, Christian Huygens, and Hobbes's old friend Sorbière. The "*bonhomme*" Hobbes speaks enthusiastically of Louis, and he might truly be called "*assertor regum*" (a title which "*Miltonius*" clearly did not deserve) and Cominges would be very glad to be the means of obtaining a pension for him. Never, he says, "will any favour have been better placed." The application was favourably received at first, but nothing seems to

have come of it. Perhaps on inquiry somebody remembered that Hobbes had left France in bad odour with the priests, to say the least; or Huygens, upon whom a pension was bestowed, may have given a confidential opinion about the squaring of the circle. Hobbes's friends anyhow denied at his death some report of a designed or actual pension. Charles, however, had given him a pension of £100 a year. An undated petition shows that it had been stopped for some time along with others; but Hobbes says he had enjoyed it to his great comfort for many years. He mentions arrears in his will (1677). Sorbière next year wrote an account of his travels with due compliment to Hobbes. The third earl, he says, "loves and reveres" his old tutor. He applies Charles's saying about baiting the bear to the clergy; and adds: "I know not how it comes to pass, the clergy are afraid of him."

Hobbes was certainly afraid of the clergy. The years 1665 and 1666 were marked by the plague and the fire of London, which naturally startled contemporaries. The fire of London might perhaps be set down to the Papists, as was recorded on the monument, but they could hardly have been responsible for the plague. That was doubtless a manifestation of Divine wrath; and to the question, what had provoked it? the obvious answer was, Hobbes. A bill was brought into parliament for the suppression of atheism and profaneness, and a committee was instructed to receive information about "Mr. Hobbes's *Leviathan*." With him was joined an eccentric Catholic priest, Thomas White (or Albius), known at the time as a controversialist. White was suspected of heresy. He had,

it seems, denied the "natural" immortality of the soul. Hobbes and White were doubtless not the only offenders. The court was not perfectly pure. The bill passed the House of Commons but was ultimately dropped. Hobbes was frightened, and not without reason. Aubrey mentions a report (probably referring to this time) that some of the bishops made a motion "to have the good old gentleman burnt for a heretic." Hereupon, he says, Hobbes put some of his papers in the fire. Hobbes wrote an essay concerning heresy to prove that he could not be legally burnt, and protested in an appendix to a Latin translation of the *Leviathan*. The essay was not published, and Hobbes probably depended for safety less upon his logic than upon the favour of Charles and of Arlington. Arlington, the secretary of state, was a concealed Catholic. There were plenty of "Hobbists" at the court at this time, as Clarendon and Burnet sorrowfully confess. Arlington possibly preferred them to the Anglican bishops who were more dangerous enemies of his church. Hobbes, at any rate, addresses Arlington as the special protector of his old age. The first result was that Hobbes was not attacked but forbidden to give further utterance to his views. Charles forbade the publication of the *Behemoth*, written in 1668; and Pepys wishing to buy the *Leviathan*, "which is now mightily called for" (3rd September, 1668), found that he had to pay twenty-four shillings for a second-hand copy; whereas it had theretofore been sold for eight shillings. It is now, he adds, sold for thirty shillings. The bishops would not allow it to be reprinted.

A year later, one Scargill, a fellow of Corpus College, Cambridge, having maintained some theses in

which phrases from the *Leviathan* were twisted to an offensive meaning, was expelled from the university, and induced to make a public recantation. He had gloried in being a Hobbist and atheist, and attributed his moral ruin to Hobbes's principles. After this alarm, says Kennett, Hobbes went more regularly to the earl's chapel, though he would not go to the parish church. He did not care for sermons. They could teach him nothing but what he knew. His fame meanwhile was spreading abroad. In 1669 he was visited several times by the Grand Duke of Tuscany, who took away a portrait and works of the philosopher, to be preserved among the most precious jewels of the Medicean library.

In 1668 Hobbes reached his eightieth year, and might have had other motives for silence than prohibitions by authority. He preserved his intellectual activity, however, almost to the last. Besides the books mentioned, he had, about 1659, according to Aubrey, and about his eightieth year according to his own account, written a Latin poem of more than two thousand elegiacs, versifying the *Historia Universalis* of Cluverius, and describing once more the usurpations of the spiritual power. In 1664 Aubrey begged him to write about law, when he answered that he could not count upon life enough. Few men could become law students at seventy-six. Aubrey, however, sent him Bacon's *Elements of the Common Laws*; whereupon he set to work, and produced a *Dialogue between a Philosopher and a Student of the Common Laws of England.* His especial aim was to confute Coke, as the worshipper of precedent. The dialogue was not finished; but it is noticed by Maine as showing that Hobbes

had anticipated many of the legal reforms afterwards advocated by Bentham. A few years later he retired from controversy—not to silence, but to a new literary employment. In 1673 he published the *Voyage of Ulysses*: a translation into English quatrains of Books IX.-XII. of the *Odyssey*. This, it seems, was by way of experiment; and a year later he produced a complete translation both of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Nobody has yet, I believe, discovered that the work is a worthy rival of Chapman or Pope: a task which might perhaps have charms for some literary revivalists. The severest critic might be touched to silence at any rate by Hobbes's own apology: "Why did I write it? Because I had nothing else to do. Why publish it? Because I thought it might take off my adversaries from showing their folly upon my more serious writings, and set them upon my verses to show their wisdom. But why without annotation? Because I had no hope to do it better than it is already done by Mr. Ogilby." It was at least a creditable occupation for a man of eighty-six. I will content myself with quoting the passage, which has often been quoted to prove that Hobbes could deviate into a really poetical phrase. It is from the famous meeting of Hector and Andromache:

> 'Now Hector met her with their little boy
> That in the nurse's arms was carried,
> And like a star upon her bosom lay
> His beautiful and shining golden head."

In 1675 Hobbes left London finally, to pass the last four years of his life at Chatsworth and Hardwick. He was still at work; his last scientific paper appeared

when he was ninety, and on the 18th of August 1679 he tells his publisher that he is writing somewhat to print in English. In October he was attacked by a complaint incurable at his age. "I shall be glad," he said upon learning it, "to find a hole to creep out of the world at." At the end of November the family moved from Chatsworth to Hardwick, and Hobbes declining to be left behind, was put upon a feather-bed in the coach. The journey was too much for his strength; an attack of paralysis soon followed, and he died on December 4th. He was buried at the parish church of Hault Hucknall. The family and neighbours who attended were "very handsomely entertained with wine, burnt and raw, cakes, biscuits, etc.," and a slab of black marble was placed upon his grave. In the inscription he is called "*Vir probus et fama eruditionis domi forisque bene cognitus.*" He had amused himself it is said, by allowing his friends to prepare epitaphs, and the design which pleased him most, was a gravestone inscribed: "This is the true Philosopher's Stone."

Hobbes left nearly £1000, "which" says Aubrey, "considering his charity, was more than I expected." He had given a piece of land to a nephew, and paid off a mortgage of £200 with which the nephew had encumbered his estate. Aubrey collects a few bits of information, with provoking gaps, as to his appearance and manners. This is a tantalising statement for phrenologists: "His head was . . . inches in compass (I have the measure) and of a mallet form (approved by the physiologers)." He was unhealthy in youth, but grew strong when about forty, and had a fresh ruddy complexion. He had an ample forehead,

and "yellowish-reddish whiskers, which naturally turned up, a sign of a brisk wit." He shaved close, except a little tip under his lip—"though nature would have afforded a venerable beard," he abandoned that ornament, to avoid affectation of philosophic dignity. "He had a good eye, hazel coloured, which would shine when he became eager, as though there were a bright live-coal within it." Various portraits, one at the National Portrait Gallery, and two in the rooms of the Royal Society,[1] show a head which is marked both by acuteness and singular dignity of expression. Hobbes might have sat for a portrait of Plato, and is, I think, the best-looking philosopher known to me.

The following account of his habits refers presumably to his last years. He rose about seven, and breakfasted on bread and butter, then he walked and meditated till ten, he dined at eleven, as his stomach could not bear waiting till the earl's dinner at two. After dinner he took a pipe of tobacco and a nap, and in the afternoon wrote down his morning's thoughts. He had been much addicted to music in his youth, and practised on the bass viol. He had always books of "prick-song" lying on his table, such as Lawes's songs, and at night when he was in bed, and the doors made fast, so that he was sure of being unheard, he would sing aloud for his health's sake. He denied the common report, that he was afraid to be alone on account of ghosts. He was not afraid of spirits, but of being knocked on the head for five or ten pounds. Hobbes was evidently careful about his health, and a believer in bodily exercise. He played tennis "twice or thrice

[1] A photograph from one of the last is prefixed to Robertson's monograph.

a year" according to Aubrey—once a week says Sorbière—when he was well over seventy. He illustrates more than one argument in the *Leviathan* by reference to the game. In the country, where there was no tennis-court, he walked up and down hill till he was in a great sweat and then had himself rubbed down. "'Tis not consistent with an harmonical soul," as Aubrey observes, "to be a woman-hater, neither had he an abhorrescence to good wine." Kennett speaks of a natural daughter, whom he called his *delictum juventutis*, and for whom he provided. But if he had been habitually immoral, his respectable opponents would hardly have refrained, as they in fact did, from any accusation of the kind. He calculated that he had been drunk one hundred times in the course of his life: which, says Aubrey, "considering his great age, did not amount to once a year." The arithmetic is erroneous; but twice a year would hardly bring him up to the average of his time. He could never endure habitual excess, as Aubrey testifies, and after sixty he drank no wine. He had some more attacks of illness (a dangerous one in 1668) besides those mentioned before, and his hand began to shake about 1650. About 1665 his writing became illegible.

Hobbes had few books in his chamber; but "Homer and Virgil were commonly on his table; sometimes Xenophon or some probable history, and Greek Testament or so"—which seems to be a pretty good selection. "He was wont to say, that if he had read as much as other men, he should have known no more than other men." He appreciated, that is, the truth that it is more important to assimilate than to accumulate materials of thought. Descartes, like

Hobbes, insisted upon, and exaggerated his ignorance of previous authors. He had read nothing, as Voltaire put it, *pas même l'Évangile*. The attitude was natural in men who were deliberately rejecting the established doctrines of their time, and trying to substitute a new scheme of thought built upon entirely new foundations. The man, as Robertson remarks, who began his career by translating Thucydides, and ended it by translating Homer, cannot be taken as a simple contemner of literature.

Aubrey was properly anxious to collect some of his hero's good sayings. If he did not succeed in making a long list, his fate was that which befalls most such enterprises. He should, like Boswell or like Hobbes himself, have carried a note-book in his pocket. One characteristic saying may be quoted. "He was," says Aubrey, "very charitable to those that were true objects of his bounty. He gave sixpence one day to a poor beggar in the Strand. Whereupon a divine asked him: "Would you have done this if it had not been Christ's command?" "Yea," said he. "Why?" quoth the other. "Because," said he, "I was in pain to consider the miserable condition of the old man, and now my alms, giving him some relief, doth also ease me." This shows perhaps that his practice was better than his ethical theory.[1]

[1] Hobbes received £50 a year from his patron besides occasional presents, such as £40 for the dedication of the *De Corpore*. He speaks (in the life) of his indifference to gain. No avaricious man, he declares, ever achieved a noble work. He had lived to study, and he condemns those who study for the sake of gain. His boast seems to be fully justified. His life was worthy of a philosopher, in spite of trifling foibles, due to temper or timidity. It is to the credit of the British

Before considering his theories, however, something may be said of the view taken of him by his contemporaries. I do not speak at present of the more serious antagonists who wrote upon his philosophy. It is enough to say here that they attacked him with remarkable unanimity. His predecessor, Bacon, was cited on all sides as a venerable authority. His successor, Locke, was adopted as a leader by the great majority of the younger thinkers. Hobbes impressed English thought almost entirely by rousing opposition. Possibly his opponents had more or less to modify their own position in order to meet his arguments; but to them at least it seemed that Hobbism was the upas tree to be cut down root and branch. The *Auctarium* gives a long list of contemporary writers upon Hobbes; but can only mention a solitary work done in his defence, and that anonymous. He was the typical atheist. "Atheism," no doubt, was a name bestowed upon a phase of sentiment common enough at the court of Charles II., as it had been, according to Mersenne, in Paris. The religious controversies of the Reformation period had naturally led to a "sceptical spirit," such as found utterance in Montaigne's immortal essays. The endless war of dogmas revealed the folly of dogmatism. Montaigne, though disclaiming philosophical pretensions, suggested philosophical problems to great thinkers like Pascal; but he was acceptable to less serious minds. The so-called

aristocracy of those days—who do not generally get many compliments—that one of them gave to the hated sceptic a support which made him virtually independent enough to devote his powers to philosophy, while he deserved it by honourable service.

"libertins," it seems, would alternately attack and humble themselves before the priests, as they objected to any moral police, or thought that, after all, absolution might be convenient. They could profess scepticism under cover of more serious thinkers, and then make edifying ends to clear their scores. Probably that was true of many Hobbists. Eachard, best known by his book on the causes of the contempt of the clergy, wrote in 1672 two very smart dialogues in ridicule of Hobbes. He divides the followers of Hobbes into pit, box, and gallery. The pit was filled by the sturdy sinners who welcomed him as an ally against morality in general; the gallery by fine gentlemen anxious to show their wit; and the boxes by men of gravity and reputation whose approval was more cautious. The "Hobbist" was generally taken to be the shallow infidel, who still figures in edifying tracts. The character of the "town-gallant" (1680) says that "he swears that the *Leviathan* may supply all the lost leaves of Solomon, though, for anything that he has read himself, it may be a treatise on catching sprats." He has only learnt through the rattle of coffee-houses; but the book maintains that there are no angels except those in petticoats! A tract of 1686 describes the "town-fop" as equipped with three or four wild companions, "half-a-dozen bottles of Burgundy, and two leaves of *Leviathan*." In Farquhar's *Constant Couple* (1700), the hypocrite pulls out of his pocket a book supposed by his friends to be full of "pious ejaculations," while he remarks to himself: "This Hobbes is an excellent fellow." The only concrete instance of such a Hobbist mentioned is Charles Blount (1654-1693), the unfortunate deist, who killed himself because

he was not allowed to marry his deceased wife's sister. He published various tracts, including a sheet of sayings from Hobbes's works, and a tract borrowed from Milton's *Areopagitica*, and deserved to be regarded as something more than a "town-fop." According to Aubrey, Dryden greatly admired Hobbes, and in his plays made use of some of Hobbes's doctrines. I am not aware of any coincidence in confirmation of this. Dryden says himself that he was sceptical by nature, and before his conversion he may have sympathised with Hobbes's hatred of priestcraft; but his poems on religion do not seem to imply any familiarity with the *Leviathan*. Hobbes ceases about the end of the century to be the butt of all orthodox controversialists. In the following generation, Toland and Collins, who professed to be applying Locke's philosophy in the interests of free-thinking, became the regular objects for attacks, and Hobbes passes out of notice. Warburton, who loved acute paradox, notices the change, and speaks of Hobbes with a certain admiration; but he shared the fate of all his contemporaries, as the eighteenth century came to think the seventeenth hopelessly old-fashioned.

CHAPTER II

THE WORLD[1]

1. *Hobbes's starting-point and aims*

I REMARKED, superfluously perhaps, that the circumstances revealed by Hobbes's biography had an important bearing upon an appreciation of his philosophy. The two incidents to which he gives a place in his own life, the sudden revelation of the charms of Euclid when he was forty, and the conversation upon the nature of sense-perception, mark the impression made upon him by movements in the contemporary world of scientific and philosophic thought. On the other side, his position in the family of a great noble encouraged a keen interest in the controversies which distracted the political world. His own intellectual and moral idiosyncrasies of course determined his special attitude towards the great issues involved in both cases. Hobbes's idiosyncrasies are sufficiently obvious. He was, in the first place, a born logician. He loved reasoning for its own sake. His great aim was to be absolutely clear, orderly, and systematic. He desired,

[1] The *De Corpore*, which is the chief authority for the following chapter, is in the first volume of the Latin works in Molesworth's edition. An English translation superintended, but not written, by Hobbes and containing some curious mistakes, forms the first volume of the English works.

in modern phrase, to effect the thorough unification of knowledge. Euclid fascinated him as constituting a complete chain of demonstrable propositions, each indissolubly linked to its predecessor, and every one confirming and confirmed by the others. A complete theory of things in general should, he thought, be a philosophical Euclid; and he hoped to lay down its fundamental principles and its main outlines. He shrank from no convictions to which his logic appeared to lead him; and he expounded them with a sublime self-confidence, tempered, indeed, by his decided unwillingness to become a martyr. Of course, like most men in whom the logical faculty is predominant, he was splendidly one-sided. When things seemed clear to him, he could not even understand that any difficulties existed for any one. That difficulties did in fact exist is plain enough to his readers, if only from the curious devices by which he is sometimes driven to meet them. But though to others he may appear to be evading the point, or adopting inconsistent solutions, to himself he always seems to be following the straightforward path of inexorable logic.

One-sidedness is a most valuable quality. It means willingness to try intellectual experiments thoroughly. A man who sees the objections to an hypothesis, is tempted not to give it a fair trial; the man who sees no objections, is tempted to force all doctrine into his own preconceived framework; but, on the other hand, he is more likely to bring into relief whatever truth it may really contain. He may at times show that what seemed to be merely paradox is an important element of the whole truth. More frequently, no doubt, he may enable others to perceive the precise

points at which his system breaks down. One-sidedness, it need hardly be said, implies defects. Hobbes, for example, was not a poet; he had no sympathy for the imaginative and emotional thinkers; he would have been the last man to lose himself, like his contemporary, Sir Thomas Browne, in an *O Altitudo*, or to soar into the regions in which the mystic is at home. For him those regions were simply the habitat of absurd chimeras, to be exorcised by downright hard-hitting dialectics. He loved to be in broad daylight, to base himself on the tangible facts which undoubtedly must be recognised in a satisfactory system. Mystery for him means nonsense, and is to be excluded from all speculation whether upon geometry or religion. Invaluable services are rendered by the active application of such an intellect; but clearly its possessor is likely to say a good many things which will shock people of a different turn, and his want of sympathy with their sentiments may lead him to dismiss contemptuously and abruptly opinions which may conceal important truth under vague imagery.

I must endeavour to set forth Hobbes's main positions impartially, without attempting to go far into problems which since his day have been discussed by generations of philosophers, and which, I fancy, are not as yet quite settled.

One point may be noticed at starting. Hobbes gave his views of both "natural" and "civil" philosophy, to use his own terms. He has been criticised both as a natural and as a civil philosopher, and the one or the other part of his work has been made most prominent according to the special purpose or personal taste of the critic. This suggests the

inquiry, whether his interest in physical science or in the nature of men and institutions gave the real starting-point of his speculation A decisive answer can scarcely be given, and an answer is of the less importance because his most characteristic point is precisely his conviction that the two inquiries are inseparably connected. Hobbes appears to have been the first writer who clearly announced that "civil philosophy" must be based upon "natural philosophy," or, in other words, that a sound "sociology" must be based upon scientific knowledge. He may be called a Herbert Spencer of the seventeenth century, and in spite of very wide differences, there is a certain resemblance between the two thinkers. Each of them aims at exhibiting a complete system in which the results of the physical sciences will be co-ordinated with ethical and political theory. Hobbes's attempt was of necessity premature; the essential data were not in existence. Physical science was still in its infancy; and Hobbes's own scientific knowledge was necessarily as crude as that of his contemporaries, and had special defects of its own. The political philosophy, again, however acute, was stated in terms of speculations which have long become obsolete. The *Leviathan*, once so terrible, may be taken for an intellectual fossil —a collection of erroneous assumptions and sophistries which are confuted in a paragraph or two of the students' text-books. Perhaps our descendants may be equally dissatisfied with systems which bulk very largely in our eyes, though we may hope that they will make allowance for our inevitable ignorance.

If, however, thinkers did not break ground by framing "premature" schemes of doctrine, they would

never advance to riper and more durable schemes. Great thinkers at least do something to test the solidity of the old structures, and here and there lay a foundation-stone or two, which will be built into the more comprehensive edifices of the future. We are not ourselves so far advanced in the social sciences that we can afford to judge our predecessors with the confidence of men who have reached a definitive system. The tentative gropings of a great man, trying to secure a starting-point, are always instructive, and Hobbes may at least show us what were some of the besetting fallacies at an early stage of speculation. He certainly has such merits in a high degree, though, as I think, more decidedly in "civil" than in "natural" philosophy.

Hobbes succeeded in working out a legal or political theory, which had a very genuine and powerful effect upon the course of speculation. Few people accepted the political doctrine generally attributed to him, and most people repudiated it with indignation. Still it influenced men, if only by repulsion, while much of his argument has been adopted by others, and occasionally reappears in curiously different combinations. I consider this to be the most important aspect of "Hobbism." It may be said, too, that whatever was his real starting-point—whether he began with political opinions and then tried to bring them into connection with his scientific views, or followed the reverse process—it was certainly the political doctrine which he expounded most thoroughly and consistently. His teaching, whatever its faults, has evidently been traced out carefully and patiently, and is a complete elaboration of certain leading principles.

It is, however, essential to consider his views of

"natural philosophy." He contributed nothing to the special sciences. His expositions of first principles show inconsistencies which suggest that he had not considered them with the sustained attention which he devoted to his political writing. Nor does it appear that he had so important an influence upon succeeding schools of thought in this as in the other direction. But he at any rate laid down in a most unflinching and vigorous fashion certain doctrines which, to say the least, startled his contemporaries, and so far must have done them good. Theologians and moralists paid him the compliment of taking him for their most serious opponent. He was regarded as the type, though almost a solitary instance, of internecine hostility to established beliefs. Upon him, we may say, were concentrated the various antipathies which in the nineteenth century were provoked by evolutionism, agnosticism, materialism, and destructive criticism. That is to say, he personified the tendencies of thought which are supposed to result from the study, or the too exclusive study, of the physical sciences. I express no opinion as to the merits of the question involved. Everybody admits that the physical sciences embody a vast amount of definitively established truth, and that, so far as they are true, they cannot be inconsistent with any other truths. The problem is whether the alleged incompatibility between the conclusions of legitimate science and those of the accepted theology is really insuperable, or only appears to be insuperable when the man of science reads a false interpretation into his doctrines.

Now Hobbes, according to the judgment of con-

temporaries, interpreted the scientific principles of his day in a sense which made them totally irreconcilable with orthodox belief, and anticipated with great penetration some inferences which in later years have shocked and alarmed believers. How far Hobbes himself admitted or denied this will appear presently. In any case he represents the first definite emergence in English thought of an antagonism which in later generations was to develop and to acquire an absorbing interest. The scientific impulse of the time had found its English prophet in Bacon. Whatever his failure in the attempt to lay down the true scientific method, his surpassing literary power enabled him to make a most imposing forecast of the coming empire of man over nature. The men who founded the Royal Society could appeal to Bacon's vast reputation as sanctioning their enterprise. Now they could do so without incurring any suspicion as to their orthodoxy. Boyle, for example, one of the chief leaders, was as conspicuous for his piety as for his scientific zeal. There was nothing objectionable in the precepts which direct a careful and methodical study of phenomena in order to discover their laws. "Baconian induction" implied no conception either of the heterodox or of the orthodox variety. It rather suggested that we should attend to facts and leave ultimate principles to take care of themselves. Bacon denounced the old scholastic subtleties which had shown their futility in dealing with the physical sciences, and by so doing he might in some degree discredit the dogmatic system of theology associated with the old philosophy. That, however, so it seemed to the more liberal thinkers of the time, did not imply an attack on

natural theology, but rather the need of disengaging its truth from the scholastic logomachies by which it had been overlaid. The ablest English divines of the next generation sympathised with that doctrine.

In Hobbes the spirit of science first becomes dogmatic and aggressive. He lays down with the utmost calmness and confidence the most startling principles. He thinks them so reasonable and obvious that you might expect even a bishop to accept them. They are demonstrated once for all. The point of view from which he started is indicated by his two significant anecdotes. The scientific method which impresses him is that of which Euclid gave him the typical instance. It is a deductive method, which develops all its conclusions from undeniable first principles. He scorns the accumulation of experiments. The difficulty which impresses him, is not that we have not sufficient data, but that we do not reason upon them with rigorous accuracy. In the second place, the one universal phenomenon is motion. We see things changing their positions relatively to each other, and in the last analysis, that is really all that we can know or measure. Contemporary developments of science have impressed these convictions upon him. His view of them is sufficiently indicated in the "Epistle Dedicatory" to the *De Corpore*. He is struck by the novelty of science. The ancients, indeed, had done much in geometry, and left in it "a most perfect pattern" of their logic. Astronomy only began when Copernicus revived an ancient opinion which had been "strangled by a snare of words." Copernicus led to Galileo, whose discovery was the "first that opened to us the gate of natural knowledge universal, which

is the knowledge of the nature of motion." The "science of man's body" was first discovered with "admirable sagacity" by Harvey—"the only man I know that, conquering envy, has established a new doctrine in his lifetime." Extraordinary advances have been made by Kepler and by Hobbes's "two friends, Gassendi and Mersenne," to whom he would have no doubt added Descartes, had Descartes been equally friendly. "Civil philosophy is much younger, as being no older (I say it provoked, and that my detractors may know how little they have wrought upon me) than my own book *De Cive*." "There walked in old Greece, indeed, a certain phantasm for superficial gravity, though full within of fraud and filth, a little like philosophy;" this was adopted by the first doctors of the Church, who thus "betrayed the citadel of Christianity." Into it there entered a theory called school divinity, walking on one foot firmly, which is the Holy Scripture, but halting on the other rotten foot, which the Apostle Paul called *vain* and might have called *pernicious philosophy*; for it has raised an infinite number of controversies in the Christian world concerning religion, and from these controversies, wars. It thus resembles the Empusa of the comic poet, having one brazen leg, and the other the leg of an ass. By putting into a clear shape the "true method of natural philosophy" he will drive away the metaphysical confusion, "not by skirmish, but by letting in the light upon her." The "Empusa" is to be exorcised because she has strangled the infant science by words. But what we have to do is not to follow her through the monstrous labyrinth of sophistry

which she has spun over the world, but simply to use our eyes and to look at the plain facts.

We have raised a dust, as Berkeley said afterwards, and complained that we cannot see. Philosophy is now among men, is the opening remark of the *De Corpore*, as corn and wine were in the world in ancient time. There were always vines and ears of corn; but as they were not cared for, men had to live upon acorns. So every man has natural reason; but for want of improving it, most men have to be content with the acorns of "daily experience." They show sounder judgment than those who (like the schoolmen) "do nothing but dispute and wrangle like men that are not well in their wits." Hobbes proposes to "lay open the few and first elements of philosophy in general as so many seeds from which pure and true philosophy may hereafter spring up by little and little." He will show how to cultivate the corn and wine. Science, we have been told, is nothing but organised common-sense. And Hobbes anticipates this dictum.

Thus Hobbes's method is to be that which has already borne fruit in the hands of the great thinkers of the time. Geometry has already made a fresh start. Copernicus has shown how the stars move. Galileo will enable us to explain how each movement is determined by previous movements. The science of astronomy will thus be constituted by the help of geometry. Then Harvey's great discovery suggests that the human body also is a mechanism, the various movements of which must be explicable on the same principles. The circulation of the blood, like the revolution of the planets, is simply a case of motion; and when we have the facts and the laws of nature,

we shall be able to deduce all physiological phenomena, like all astronomical phenomena, by the help of geometry. Hobbes assumes also that the same methods will enable us to construct his "civil" philosophy.

Meanwhile we see the general impression made upon Hobbes by his studies in Euclid, and by his doctrine that motion is the universal fact. It means, in short, that he holds that the aim of all philosophy is to give a mechanical theory of the universe. That, again, is to say that he sees clearly what is in fact the ultimate aim of all the physical sciences. The scientific inquirer endeavours as far as possible to give the rules embodied in all physical phenomena in terms of time and space. He imagines a bewildering dance of innumerable atoms, lying somehow behind the visible world, moving in different directions, colliding, combining and separating and going through the most complicated evolutions. Perhaps the ignorant person, or the profound metaphysician, may decline to believe that there are any such things at all, or, at any rate, to believe that they are the only realities. But even if they do not exist, they have to be invented. Our justification for creating them is that they enable us to state the rules by which, from a given state of things, we can accurately foretell the future or go back to the past. They may be only a working hypothesis, or may be realities which might conceivably become visible or tangible. The method, however, in any case, implies that the ultimate problem is, as Hobbes said, one of geometry. The atoms have no properties, except the property of embodying certain laws of motion; and the whole

problem becomes that of stating how one state of motion will pass into another. That is to say, it is ultimately a problem of geometry or the measurement of spaces. So far Hobbes agrees with Descartes: "Give me space and movement, and I will make the world." *Toute ma physique n'est autre chose que la géométrie.* Hobbes undoubtedly was not so good a geometer as Descartes; but they fully agree in principle. "They that study natural philosophy," says Hobbes, "study in vain, except they begin at geometry; and such writers and disputers thereof as are ignorant of geometry do but make their hearers and readers lose their time." Civil philosophy must, as he adds, be based upon physics, and therefore upon geometry. Both Hobbes and Descartes accepted Harvey's discovery as giving a mechanical explanation of physiological phenomena. Descartes's doctrine that animals are automatic was equally applicable to the working of the human body, and Huxley has set forth with his usual vigour and clearness the importance of this doctrine in the development of physiology.

Upon such questions I can say nothing; and Hobbes did not distinguish himself in that direction. But the next peculiarity of his philosophy is marked by his divergence from Descartes. In his objections to the *Meditations*, Hobbes criticises the famous "*je pense: donc je suis.*" "I think" and "I am thinking," he says, mean the same. Therefore the conclusion is good: "If I think, I am." But it does not follow that "I" who think am a spirit or a soul. On the contrary, he declares, it would seem to follow that a thing which thinks is something corporeal. I do not think that I think, I simply think; or thought and its object are

one. Descartes complains that Hobbes has not attended to a later passage in the *Meditations*, which proves that the soul or thinking thing cannot be corporeal. I need not go into the arguments. The difference is indeed of that radical kind in which argument rarely produces agreement. Descartes conceives himself to have proved that the soul and the body are of diametrically opposite natures, and though he believes in both, thinks that our conviction of the existence of the soul is more fundamental than our conviction of the existence of the body. The complete antithesis between the spiritual and the natural world became of course a cardinal point of his system, and generations of metaphysicians were to puzzle themselves over the nature of the intimate relation which, as he also held, binds them in inseparable unity.

Hobbes, on the other hand, seems simply to ignore this contrast. He takes for granted, for he scarcely argues the question, that the material world is the only world. In a later *Objection*, he gives it as his own opinion that spirit is nothing but a movement in certain parts of the organism. In other words, thought, as well as every physical process, is a species of the universal genus "motion." Hobbes is so far a simple and thoroughgoing materialist. That of course simplifies things. The whole of knowledge represents for him an extension of the physical sciences. The theory of the human body and the theory of the political body are more complicated than the theory of the stars; but we still have to do with nothing but motion, though in forms more intricate and difficult to measure. "The whole mass of things that are," he says in the *Leviathan*, "is corporeal, that is to say,

body; and hath the dimensions of magnitude, namely, length, breadth, and depth; also every part of body is likewise body, and hath the like dimensions; and consequently every part of the universe is body, and that which is not body is no part of the universe; and because the universe is all, that which is no part of it is *nothing*, and consequently nowhere. Nor does it follow from hence," he adds, "that spirits are *nothing*: for they have dimensions and are therefore really bodies, though that name in common speech be given to such bodies only as are visible and palpable, that is, that have some degree of opacity." The last sentence is required by a consideration which frequently hampers his utterance. He is bound to admit that spirits exist, for spirits are mentioned in Scripture, and, for whatever reason, he will not contradict Scripture. But no proof can be given of existences of which it is impossible to have "natural evidence." All evidence appeals to the senses; but a spirit is taken to be that which does not "work upon the sense," and is therefore not "conceptible." When we use such words as "living, sensible, rational, hot, cold, moved, quiet," as he calmly remarks, the word "matter" or "body" is understood, all such "being names of matter." In "natural discourse," therefore, a "spirit" means a phantasm—a dream mistaken for a reality. The spirits mentioned in supernatural discourse must exist; they must therefore be bodies, for nothing exists except bodies; but they can be kept out of harm's way. As bodies they must be space-filling; but they are made of such subtle materials that they cannot act upon other bodies. They cannot make their existence known, for they cannot affect motion.

Motion is the cause of all things: "all mutation is motion; motion can have no cause except motion"; and these flimsy entities are in the universe without taking part in it. For us they are nonentities. If motion can be caused by motion alone, that motion can cause nothing but motion. Hobbes's opponents inferred that, as thought is not motion, it must have some other cause, or inhere in a subject which is not material. Hobbes infers that as nothing can exist which is not material, thought must itself be motion.

This is really Hobbes's starting-point and guiding principle. Man is an automaton; thought is a motion in his brain; all his actions can be explained by the laws of motion, like the motion of a clock or of the Chatsworth waterworks. In the attempt to carry out this conception thoroughly, Hobbes gets into various difficulties. A modern materialist may perhaps urge that the difficulties can be surmounted by a fuller knowledge of physical science. The opposite explanation is that the initial assumption is radically false, and that Hobbes's merit, as Professor Hoeffding says, is that his consistent adoption of it brings out the inevitable failure of a thoroughgoing materialism.

To understand him we must begin by granting his postulate. Let us admit provisionally that man is simply an automaton and yet that he can somehow think, feel, reason, and become a philosopher.

First of all, however, Hobbes explains what is the aim of his philosophy. Philosophy, according to him, means a knowledge of the effects which will be produced by given causes or, conversely, of the causes which have produced given effects. We may trace the working of

the mechanism in order to make use of it for our own purposes. Philosophy then is strictly "practical" or "utilitarian," to use the common phrases. The "inward glory and triumph of mind" arising from our mastery of some abstruse question would not of itself repay the pains necessary to obtain the result. "The end of knowledge is power": a phrase which recalls Bacon's famous saying.[1] Both Bacon and Hobbes desire knowledge to enable men to rule the forces of nature. The utility of "natural philosophy" appears in such arts as navigation, architecture, and so forth; and we may see what they have done for mankind by comparing the civilised races of Europe with the Americans and "those that live near the poles." Since all men, as Hobbes assumes, have the same faculties, the whole difference is due to philosophy. "Moral and civil philosophy," however, is equally useful, though its utility must be measured not by the commodities which it gives but by the calamities which it obviates. The worst of calamities is war, especially civil war. From war proceed "slaughter, solitude, and the want of all things." All men know these to be evil. Why then do wars continue? Because men do not know the causes of war and peace. Few men, that is to say,

[1] "Knowledge is power," as Hamilton points out (Dugald Stewart's Works, v. 38) is a running title in the *Advancement of Learning* and may not be Bacon's own phrase. However, in the *Meditationes Sacrae* we may see in a theological context *ipsa scientia potestas est*: and this in the translation becomes "knowledge itself is power." See Bacon's Works, ed. Spedding, vii. 241, 253. It has often been denied that Bacon used the words, as in Bulwer's *My Novel*, where the wise confute a young man who has rashly adopted them. Anyhow, as Hamilton says, they clearly represent Bacon's meaning.

have learnt the "duties which unite and keep men in peace." Now "the knowledge of these duties is moral philosophy." Hobbes thus holds substantially a doctrine which was characteristic of a later period and was vigorously expounded by Buckle. The growth of civilisation means essentially the growth of knowledge. Knowledge will not only enable us to apply mechanical inventions, but will show the identity of human interests and lead to the extirpation of war. Hobbes's view of the methods by which this consummation was to be reached differed materially from that of the Utilitarians of the middle of the nineteenth century, but the general conception is the same.

He proceeds to define the "subject" of philosophy. It has nothing to do with theology (for pretty obvious reasons), nor with the doctrine of angels, nor of things (if such there be) which are not bodies, nor with revelation which does not appeal to reason, nor with astrology and other "divinations which are not well grounded"; nor with the doctrine of "God's worship," which is the "object of faith, not of knowledge." Moreover it excludes "history as well natural as political, though most useful (nay necessary) to philosophy"; for such knowledge is "but experience or authority, and not ratiocination." Philosophy deals exclusively with the "generation and properties" of the two chief kinds of bodies—the natural body, a work of nature, and the commonwealth, the body made by the agreement of men. "Civil philosophy," which deals with the last, is divisible into two: "ethics," which deals with human nature, and "politics," which deals with men as citizens. The treatise, therefore, which gives the general principles

applicable to all philosophy is called *De Corpore*, since "body" includes all that is knowable.

2. *Logic*

The world is made of unchangeable but moving bodies. All that happens is the transformation of one set of motions into another according to certain fixed laws. Somehow or another we can ascertain these laws, and, when duly systematised, they become "philosophy," or a statement of necessary truths. What then is truth? Hobbes observes that "truth is not an affection of the thing, but of the proposition concerning it." The word "true" is often, but inaccurately, opposed to "feigned." But, properly speaking, if we say that a ghost or the image in a mirror is not a man, we do not assert that the ghost is "false," but that the proposition "a ghost is a man" is false. "A ghost is (still) a very ghost." Truth and falsehood belong to the reasoning process which is peculiar to man, upon whom it confers the privilege of framing "general rules." This privilege, indeed, is "allayed by another"; and that is by the privilege of absurdity, to which no living creature is subject but man only. And of men "those are of all most subject to it that profess philosophy." Nothing, as Cicero said, can be so absurd as not to be found in their books. Hobbes will explain the source of their errors.

Meanwhile we have a problem. Reality belongs to bodies; truth to propositions or thought. What then is that which thinks? Hobbes has replied that it is body, and thought is a movement in the body. But it is plain that if this be true, the thinking thing does

not directly perceive its own nature. Thought does not present itself as a movement. We are not conscious of the physical processes which somehow constitute or underlie the thinking process. It follows that as thoughts are not bodies, they are unreal—mere nonentities or "phantasms," as Hobbes generally puts it. Reality thus seems to be entirely divorced from truth. The thought-process may be determined by motion, but, as immediately known, it is a set of imaginary phantasmagoria playing over the surface of things but itself unreal. The "soul" is real in so far as it is material; but the ideal world made of phantasms is unreal. Yet somehow the soul manages to reason by help of the phantasms, and to discover the rules of bodily movement. The problem remains, how this process is to be explained. Hobbes's answer gives his theory of logic, and forms the first part of the *De Corpore*. The title *Computatio sive Logica* indicates his peculiar view. All ratiocination, he declares, is computing. Reasoning is addition or subtraction. Arithmeticians add or substract numbers; geometricians add lines and figures; logicians add names to make affirmations; affirmations to make syllogisms; and syllogisms to make demonstrations. The type of reasoning for him is still Euclid. Adding and subtracting suggest the process by which the square on the hypothenuse in his favourite proposition may be cut up and put together again so as to form the squares on the two sides. He had a prejudice against the new methods by which algebraic calculation was being substituted for the direct intuitive methods of geometry, and to the arithmetic which, in the hands of the detestable Wallis and his like, was leading to

humbug about infinitesimals. Arithmetic, however, seems best to illustrate his view. Number, as he would say, is not "an affection of the thing." The same thing may be one or twelve, as we count in feet or inches. The unit is arbitrary. And yet numbering enables us to state the most essential properties of things. Ten or a hundred by itself is a mark of no particular body, and is therefore a nonentity. But it meant something very real that Hobbes's hundred a year came to just ten times ten pounds. Reasoning in general is counting with names or numbers. "Words," as he says, in one of his pithiest aphorisms, "are wise men's counters; they do but reckon with them, but they are the money of fools." The remark has a wide application; and, in this case, the "fools" are those who talk scholastic jargon. But it states his general principle. The "use of names in registering our thoughts," as he remarks elsewhere, "is in nothing so evident as in numbering." Once men could not count, except on their fingers, as is shown by the decimal notation. The names learnt in the right order enable us to perform all the operations of arithmetic.

Since the names are thus the counters, out of which we frame propositions, we have to ask, What is a name? Hobbes gives a famous definition. "A name is a word taken at pleasure, to serve for a mark which may raise in our mind a thought like to some thought we had before, and which being (disposed in speech and [1]) pronounced to others, may be a sign to them of what the speaker had or had not before in his mind." Names are thus "marks to ourselves." "How incon-

[1] Omitted by error in the English version.

stant and fading men's thoughts are, and how much the recovery of them depends upon chance, there is none but knows by infallible experience in himself!" No man remembers numbers without the names of numbers disposed in order and learnt by heart. The name recalls not only the thing but the general rule. The results given by reasoning without such helps will presently slip from us. We should get on very slowly if we had to find out the multiplication table every time we did a sum. "Marks" are thus necessary to recall thoughts, and become "signs" when we teach them to others, which is an essential condition of the preservation and growth of science. To serve as signs, again, it is necessary that names as marks should be "disposed and ordered in speech." To speak rationally, you must not only renew the memory of a thing, but say what you are thinking of its relation to other things. For that purpose, again, words may be useful which are not names of things, but only of "fictions and phantasms of things." That words are an essential instrument of thought which, without them, could not, to say the least, get beyond rudimentary and vague inferences is, I take it, a very sound doctrine. Hobbes did good service by directing attention emphatically to it. He managed, however, to give it a strange twist. Signs, he remarks, may be "natural" or "arbitrary." The cloud is a natural sign of rain; a bush at a tavern door is an arbitrary sign of wine to be sold. Now words are clearly "arbitrary," as was signally proved in the Garden of Eden, and again, at the Tower of Babel. This is of course obvious. If "*homo*" meant in Latin what "man" means in English, it is plain that the

sound employed as a mark varies "arbitrarily." But Hobbes sometimes speaks as if, because language is the instrument of reasoning, and yet uses arbitrary marks, reasoning gives arbitrary results. So, he says in his fourth objection to Descartes, reasoning may be simply an assemblage and concatenation of names by the word "is."[1] If that be so, he says, reason does not conclude to the nature of things, but only to their names; that is, it shows whether we are connecting them according to the conventions which we have made at fancy about their significations. Descartes naturally replies that we reason about things, not names; and that a Frenchman and a German may have the same thoughts though they express them in entirely different words. Three and two, says Hobbes elsewhere, make five, because men have agreed that "five" shall be the name of as many units as there are in three and two. That explains why we say "two" and "three" instead of "deux" and "trois," but does not prove that we can alter the truth expressed by arbitrary sounds. Definitions are "truths constituted arbitrarily by the inventors of speech, and therefore not to be demonstrated." We make such truths ourselves (*vera esse facimus nosmet ipsi*) by our consent to the use of names.

The doctrine, so stated, seems too absurd even for a philosopher (as Hobbes would have said), and certainly does not correspond to his own conviction of the infallibility of his demonstrations. It is inconsistent too

[1] He is careful to point out that the copula is not necessary, and that the meaning might be expressed by simply putting two names together. A mistake on this point leads to the invention of such scholastic terms as "entity."

with much that he says elsewhere. It seems to be a trick played upon him by his logic, for, trying to give a fall to his antagonists, he loses his own balance. His general line of thought is intelligible. Philosophy, we see, according to him, is formed by a chain of true propositions, linked or (as he puts it) added together. Each link is a syllogism; and reasoning demonstrates that, if the first propositions be true, all the dependent propositions must be equally true. Language is the essential instrument of the process, though language, as he admits, is not necessary to thought, only to the articulate thought which leads to science. We make inferences from "natural signs"; rain, for example, is suggested by clouds, though the inference is often erroneous, and no experience can be demonstrative. Again, a man though deaf and dumb may observe that the angles of a particular triangle are equal to two right angles; but only the man who has the use of speech can prove that the property is necessarily true of all triangles. "Experience concludeth nothing universally." It tells us that day and night have always followed each other; not that they always will follow.

Now, though "experience" suggests a kind of reasoning, it is only with the use of language that "ratiocination" properly begins. Science embodies "ratiocination." The validity of ratiocination depends entirely upon the correct use of its essential instrument, language. This, as Hobbes expresses it, means that the whole process is dependent upon definitions. If definitions were arbitrary, all science must be arbitrary. Nothing could be further from his mind than this conclusion, and what he really means may

be gathered from the purpose of his argument. Philosophy aims first at deducing effects from causes. Definitions are the "primary propositions" from which this process starts. The definitions, therefore, of "all things that are caused, must consist of such names as express the cause or matter of generation." When we have defined the circle as the figure made by "the circumduction of a body whereof one end remains unmoved," we can deduce all the properties of the circle. Geometrical relations enable us to determine the motions of the body, and therefore the relations of cause and effect. Theories of motion, of "physics," and ultimately of ethics and politics, are founded upon geometry, and geometry itself follows from the definitions. Euclid, it is true, lays down certain axioms, but Hobbes argues that the axioms themselves follow from the definitions. He deduces the axiom, for example, that "a whole is greater than any part thereof," from the definition of "greater." Demonstration requires ratiocination, and ratiocination is only possible when we start from definitions which are "nothing but the explication of our simple conceptions." The "principles of ratiocination consist in our own understanding, that is, in the legitimate use of such words as we ourselves constitute." The meaning seems to be that geometrical truths owe their peculiar certainty to the fact that geometry is through and through an intellectual construction. We can understand it, because in some sense we make it. The definitions, then, are not "arbitrary" in the sense that any other combination of words would do as well, or that the properties of a figure would alter if we defined it differently. By "arbitrary" he means

rather "artificial," or somehow made by us and not by the things. The words are mere counters, or instruments for calculating which we devise for the purpose. We make them as a workman makes keys for opening locks. He may make what tools he pleases, but it does not follow that they will serve his purpose equally well. We make the key ourselves, but all keys will not open the lock.

We may define a figure by any of the properties peculiar to it; we may regard a circle as made by the revolution of the radius or as the figure which will enclose the maximum area by its circumference. But we must somehow find the mode which will actually generate it. The definition marks the point at which we have got hold of the thing by its right end, or have so organised our "simple conceptions" that they explain the "generation" of the more complex. The mind must find the appropriate instruments, though when Hobbes thinks of them as of simple creations out of nothing, he uses "arbitrary" in an apparently absurd sense. His theory thus becomes feasible, and suggests a real answer to the problem as to the special prerogative of mathematical proof. How far it contains truth is a question which I must leave to writers who can walk confidently in the perplexing border region between mathematics and metaphysics.[1]

[1] One remark may be made parenthetically. Dugald Stewart, in a passage which had a great effect upon J. S. Mill (as Mill tells us in his Autobiography), takes Hobbes's view of definitions in geometry. Definitions serve generally to prevent ambiguity, and in geometry they serve as the real principles of our reasoning. He then remarks that Condillac has said that propositions, equations, and judgments are at bottom the same thing. This he ridicules, observing that Condillac would be surprised to

To complete our sketch of his logical scheme we must glance at the process by which we get from the definitions to the demonstrated truths. Names are put together to form propositions and propositions to form syllogisms. Hobbes accepts the ordinary rules about syllogisms, of which he gives a brief summary. The question remains, What, according to him, is the ultimate nature of the process? Why is the syllogism demonstrative? Now, in the first place, as a thorough nominalist, he denies the existence of any "universals" except names. Man is the name of Peter, John, and so forth, but there is no such thing as an universal man. We have an "idea" of one man, for every idea is one and of one thing. There is no "idea" of man in general, and the mistake arises from supposing that what is true of the name is true of the idea. In "nature," that is, there are only individuals, not classes. Now in the syllogism we seem to learn something from referring the individual to a class. Since Peter is a man, he has the properties of a man. What, then, is the implied logic? Hobbes's answer is simple. A proposition is true "when the predicate is the name of everything of which the subject is the name." "Man is a living creature" is true, "because everything that is called man is also called living creature." The syllogism carries us a step further by "adding" an

find that he was reviving the "obsolete conceit" of an old English writer, *i.e.*, Hobbes. Evidently, the *De Corpore* had fallen into oblivion in Britain, though in Stewart's time, if not in Condillac's, it was exciting great interest in France. Stewart himself, it would seem, had hardly got beyond the first chapter, or he certainly would have been candid enough to mention that he too was reviving a doctrine of the old writer.

affirmation. Take, for example, "every living creature is a body; man is a living creature; therefore man is a body." The minor premise is true, if the predicate "living creature" is a name of the same thing as the subject (man). The major premise is true if the predicate (body) is a name of the same thing as the subject (living creature). Therefore "the three names are also names of the one and the same thing," or "man is a body" is a true proposition. He goes on to explain what "passes in the mind" when we syllogise. We "conceive the image of a man speaking" and remember that "what so appears is called man"; we have the image of the same man moving, and remember that what so appears is called "living creature"; and finally the image "filling space" is called "body." Thus the three names are names of the same things. Hobbes has told us before that the proposition "man is a living creature" is true because it pleased man to impose both these names on "one thing," and declares that the truth is therefore "arbitrary."

This queer doctrine still entangles him. If we only call a thing a "man" which we also call a "living creature," the proposition "man is a living creature" must be verbally true. We have agreed to put a mark only where there is another mark. But that does not explain why "man" applies to John, Thomas, and Peter, not to a stick or a dog, nor what is meant by calling these three men "living creatures." Hobbes's account of what passes in the mind implies indeed that the words are in some way defined. We call that "man" which has the faculty of speech, and that "living creature" which moves; and possibly by remembering Hobbes's doctrine as to definitions we

may attribute to him a more rational meaning. He is always thinking of his Euclid. The definition of a circle tells us how it is generated, and enables us to deduce all its properties, or to infer that a figure which has one property has also the others. The different names describing the properties apply to the same thing, though the "thing" is not a mere simple unit but a complex of relations If then "man" and "living creature" are modifications of "body," and if we could tell how they are "generated" in conformity with certain laws of motion and of various combinations of matter, we could deduce all the properties of the species from simple definitions, and see how one attribute such as "speaking" was a product under certain conditions of "moving" or "living." The premises of the syllogism would express the relations between the various classes thus formed. The whole proceeding is for Hobbes "arbitrary," because the process is carried out in the world of "ideas" or "phantasms" which we make or organise for ourselves —for thoughts are not "things," but unreal entities, which, for some reasons that he has not explained, correspond in some way to the facts. Moreover, in the case of "syllogising," we come to a difficulty of which he will, as we shall see, try to find some solution. A phenomenon is presented to us in the concrete, and we do not know the underlying process by which it has been evolved out of the simpler elements. We cannot in the least say how faculty of speech is related to life in general. We can only say that, somehow or other, one thing or one name includes the other: and that appears to be an "arbitrary" assumption made to enable us to reason.

3. *Physical Science*

Whatever is the explanation of Hobbes's strange assumption that names must be "arbitrary" in order that reasoning may be demonstrative, we have the old difficulty. Certainty belongs to the world of thought; but thought is "unreal" and the words which are its tools can be put together at pleasure. Reality belongs to fact which is hidden behind the phantasms. How do we get across the chasm which divides them? What are the "things" which lie behind the veil of thoughts? This leads to a further speculation. Hobbes tells us that the things to which we give names are of four kinds: bodies, phantasms, "accidents" and names themselves. I need say nothing of the "accidents," an irrelevant intrusion which bothers him a good deal. The real distinction is between bodies and phantasms, and the question is how they are related.

Here we come to a remarkable result. Hobbes seems to be diverging from his thoroughgoing materialism. Geometry and the laws of motion will not be sufficient for the problems that meet him. Having expounded his logic, he comes in the second part of the *De Corpore* to the first grounds of philosophy. It is rather startling to find this rigid materialist declaring that time and space are, as we now say, "subjective." Descartes begins by doubting whether our sensations really prove the existence of an external world, and finds doubt insuperable. Hobbes begins by asking what would happen if we supposed the whole external world to be annihilated. He answers that it would make no difference. We should still have our "ideas of the world." They are mere "phantasms, happen-

ing internally to him that imagineth," but will still appear to be "external" and independent of the mind. Moreover, even if outside things are taken to remain, "we still compute nothing but our own phantasms." We mark out our measurements of the stars and the earth "sitting still in our closets or in the dark." Space is not an affection of the body. Otherwise, when a body moved, it would carry its place away with it. Time is equally a phantasm. A year is time, and yet nobody thinks that a year is "the accident or affection of any body." The past and future do not exist, and consequently days, months, and years must be "the names of computations made in our minds." He therefore defines space as the "phantasm of a thing existing without the mind simply," and time as "the phantasm of before and after in motion." When space and time are thus declared to be mere "phantasms," and therefore to have no existence outside of the mind, and when, moreover, we are told that our reasoning depends entirely upon them, we are well on the way to Berkeley's idealism or Hume's scepticism. "Phantasms," or "ideas"—he uses both words,—are the ultimate elements of our thoughts; and it would be the next step to declare with Berkeley the non-existence of matter, while Hobbes already agrees with Hume that a soul is a superfluity. With Hobbes, however, body, it appears, is still the reality and the only reality. Space, he has told us, is "imaginary because a mere phantasm, yet that very thing which all men call so." Now suppose the thing previously annihilated to be created over again. Then it must, in the first place, fill some part of the imaginary space and, in the second place, must have "no dependence upon our thought."

Hence he defines body to be "that which having no dependence upon our thought is coincident or co-extended with some part of space." A body, he tell us afterwards, has "always the same magnitude, but does not keep the same place." "Place is nothing out of the mind, nor magnitude anything within it." "Place is feigned extension, but magnitude true extension." Place is immovable, whereas bodies move. It appears, therefore, that there is real space by which the magnitude of any body is measured, and space is imaginary. It must, so it seems, be both purely objective and purely subjective. Though the phantasm is unreal, it somehow enables us to know the realities.

The peculiarity of Hobbes's position is just this: that he does not perceive that any problem is raised by the contrast between soul and body—the world of thought and the world of things. He does not seek for any hypothesis, such as Spinoza's one substance with infinite attributes, intended to bring the two worlds into unity. Bodies are still independent of thought, and are the sole and absolute realities. Thought is a mere play of phantasms, which are unreal because only in the mind. Yet the phantasms give us knowledge of the bodies which go on placidly moving outside of thought; and the mind, which knows only its phantasms, is aware of the outside world, and is itself a set of motions in that world. That, it seems, must be simply taken for granted and no explanation is required. It never suggests any scepticism as to the possibility of knowledge. Hobbes will be as dogmatic as if no difficulty existed. Nobody, as is already sufficiently evident, could be more profoundly impressed by that conception

of the universe which is indicated by such phrases as the "reign of law" and the "uniformity of nature." All phenomena without exception present themselves in conformity with certain general rules. The future could be absolutely foreseen and the past recalled if we had the required knowledge. From the existing state of the solar system, the astronomer could say what it was at any preceding, or what it will be at any succeeding epoch. These powers indeed are limited by the enormous complexity of the calculations and of the facts to which they are applied. Other sciences are less perfect because they have to deal with more intricate problems, but not because any science includes a really arbitrary element. From the minutest to the most universal phenomenon, everything that will happen is already predetermined. The fall of a leaf or the explosion of a world is equally part of the single unalterable system of things. Spinoza was to give the most impressive version of a theory which may be appalling to some minds, and simply self-evident to others; but Hobbes was not less possessed with the conviction than his greater follower.

This mode of interpreting the universe is implied by the theory of cause and effect which he now expounds. As we have sufficiently seen, "all mutation is motion," and the changes of motion are simply the modification of previous motions. Cause, he says, is the aggregate of all the accidents of the agent and the patient. Omitting his technical word "accident," we may say that whatever motion takes place in a thing is determined by the whole set of previous conditions. If all the conditions necessary for a given effect are present, it will "necessarily" happen; and if one of them be

absent, it will necessarily not happen. Whatever happens has a "necessary cause," looking backwards, and looking forwards a necessary effect. "Causation and the production of effects," he adds, "consist in a certain continual progress." Causation, that is, is not with him a mere sequence of disconnected phenomena, but a continuous process, in which one set of motions is always being transformed into another. We may "in imagination" divide the process into two parts at any assumed instant; we shall then call the preceding part the cause, and the succeeding part the effect. The same causes will of course always produce the same effect, since they differ in nothing but time. The conception of power again suggests different ways of looking at the same process. The "power of the agent" is what is called the "efficient cause." We use the word "power" when we are thinking of the future, and "cause" when we are thinking of the effect as already produced. The power of the patient, again, is what is called the "material cause," with reference to the effect which will be produced by the "efficient cause," and both together are the entire cause. Besides these the traditional scheme recognised also "formal" and "final" causes. The "formal," according to Hobbes, are superfluous. "When it is said that the essence of a thing is the cause thereof, *as to be rational is the cause of man*, it is not intelligible; for it is all one as if it were said, *to be a man is the cause of man*, which is not well said." A "final cause," again, "has no place but in such things as have sense and will," and in that case, as he undertakes to prove, it is an "efficient cause."

The rejection of "final causes," Bacon's "barren

virgins," is inevitable. It is indeed obvious that the conception is altogether out of place from Hobbes's point of view; that is, from a thoroughgoing mechanical explanation of the universe. What we have to do is to trace the series of movements of the whole set of interacting bodies. At every stage the motion of each body is the resultant of its own previous movement and of the movement of the various bodies which have come into contact with it. Why does a projectile move in a certain direction and with a certain velocity? The answer is given by its previous state, and the explosive or restraining forces which have modified that state. Each of these forces means that other bodies have come into contact with it and modified its conduct in accordance with the laws of motion. So far, obviously, we have nothing to do with "end" in the sense of purpose. We are tracing a single process backwards and forwards. If, again, we take a mechanism, such as the clock, which plays so conspicuous a part in the illustration of "final causes," we explain the movement of the hands by the various wheels, chains, and so forth which transmit motion from the weight or spring. If we trace the process backward, we come to the point at which the clock itself was put together. The cause then is the set of processes, including on the one hand the muscular movements of the clockmaker, and on the other, the movements impressed upon the materials. All that man does is to move one bit of matter to or from another. The clockmaker's actions, again, are determined by his purpose, by his "end," and the means which his calculations prescribe for securing the end. But now, according to Hobbes, the clockmaker

is just as much an automaton as the clock. His perceptions, calculations, and motives are movements in his brain, due to the impact of external bodies upon the organs of sense and the reaction which takes place in the brain. They are the "efficient cause" of the clock, and the so-called "final cause" is merely a name for the same set of processes absolutely determined by the preceding processes. The man desires and expects, but the senses and expectations are themselves part of the movements implied. It is clear that from Hobbes's point of view, the so-called "final cause" is a mere name for the efficient cause, considered in one relation, and that the whole series of events is purely mechanical. Hobbes, it is true, professes to believe in a Creator who once put the world together and must have intended whatever comes to pass; but science can only trace the series of events and ask what was the preceding state from which any given state is generated. The fact that everything was intended does not explain how everything comes to pass; and to diverge from the question how things actually happen to the question why they should happen is to leave the ground of science and to get merely nugatory answers, diverting us from the right line of real investigation.

One other point is characteristic of Hobbes's system. Whatever happens, he holds, happens necessarily. Moreover, whatever does not happen is impossible. "Every act which is not impossible," as he puts it, "shall at some time be produced." There is no such thing as contingency. "That is called contingent," he says, "of which the necessary cause is not yet perceived." That is to say, it is not only "necessary" that, if the solar system was put together in a certain

way, certain results should follow, or that if a sparrow is shot, he should fall to the ground; but it is also necessary that the solar system should be just what it is, and that the sparrow and the shot should have come into collision just when they actually did.

Omitting certain deviations into mathematical speculation and circle-squaring, we come in the last part of the *De Corpore* to an important step towards the solution of a difficulty already indicated. We have now to consider "Physics or the phenomena of nature." He gives theories of light, the tides, and gravitation, and it is needless to say that upon such matters it was impossible for him to reach any valuable results. His view of the proper method of treatment, however, implies an important doctrine. "Philosophy," as we have seen, may either deduce effects from causes or causes from effects. Hitherto he has confined himself to the first—the deduction of effects from causes. He has been able to start from definitions—from the truths which we "create ourselves"—and he has, as he maintains, affirmed nothing except the definitions themselves, or the propositions which can be logically inferred therefrom: that is to say, "nothing which is not sufficiently demonstrated to all those that agree with me in the use of words and appellations; for whose sake only I have written the same." But now we have to change the method. We start from "the appearances of nature," which are known to us by sense. Our first principles are not such as are impressed by definitions, "but such as being placed in the things themselves by the author of nature, are by us observed in them; and we make use of them in simple and particular, not universal propositions."

The senses, as we have already seen, give only empirical knowledge, which is made up of merely probable statements, such as "clouds are a sign of rain," and cannot reveal those necessary truths of which alone science consists. This would be the point at which we might expect something about the Baconian methods of induction. Hobbes takes a different line.

We are to reason about phenomena: and "of all phenomena or appearances which are near us, the most admirable is apparition itself, τὸ φαίνεσθαι: namely, that some natural bodies have in themselves the patterns almost of all things, and others of none at all." By the patterns (*exemplaria*) he means the "phantasms" which exist only in the thinking bodies—in men, not in stones. What then is the cause of these "ideas and phantasms which are perpetually generated within us"? Since they are continually changing, they must be due to some change "in the sentient." Since all change is motion, again, this implies that the senses are due to motion in the organs of sense. The object is some "remote body," from which pressure is propagated to the organ, and the consequent endeavour or reaction of the organ. "Endeavour" he has defined in a previous passage to be "motion made in less time and space than can be given; or motion through the length of a point, and in an instant or point of time." Sense, then, is the phantasm made by the "endeavour" outward in the organ, which is reaction against the endeavour inwards from the object. Something very like this may be read in modern books, which tell us how the stimulus to the nerve transmits molecular movement to the brain, and sets up a reflex action. Hobbes, however, could only speak very vaguely, and

takes for granted much now exploded physiology. He is a little doubtful about one point. Some philosophers have maintained that "all bodies are endued with sense." If sense were made by reaction alone, their argument would be unanswerable. It is, however, the possession of organs by living bodies which makes the difference. The organs preserve the motions set up in them: whereas in inanimate bodies the motion or reaction must cease as soon as the external pressure ceases, and the phantasm which it causes vanishes instantaneously. Sense, to be of any use in giving knowledge, must be accompanied with memory, for the knowledge which it gives depends upon the comparison of the phantasms. This suggests one of his significant phrases. "It is almost all one for a man to be always sensible of one and the same thing, and not to be sensible at all of any things," or, in his pithier Latin, "*sentire semper idem et non sentire ad idem recidunt.*" Imagination, again, is "nothing else but sense decaying or weakened by the absence of object." The difficulty remains, how memory, which is thus necessary for the comparison of phantasms and all knowledge derived from the senses, can be interpreted in terms of motion. It seems as if we still required a mind different from the organ to look on and compare the decaying senses. Self-consciousness remains a mystery. Hobbes answers Descartes's "*Je pense*" by saying that we cannot have a thought of a thought; but he holds that memory is a feeling of a feeling. *Sentire se sentisse, meminisse est.*

This involves another remark. Hobbes insists emphatically that the phantasm is somehow quite different from the motion by which it is caused. He had already

pointed out in the *Human Nature* that people easily fancy that colour and shape belong to the object, or that the sound is in the bell. The opinion has been so long received that the contrary must seem a paradox. Yet the common view involves the introduction of the old "species visible and intelligible": it is "worse than a paradox—an impossibility." The colour and "image" are "nothing without us." They are apparitions due to the motions in the brain.[1] The senses are deceptive, as when men "divers times" see objects double, or take a reflected image for a reality, or see a flash of light from a blow on the eye. The same is true of the other senses. Smells and tastes vary from man to man. The heat which we feel from the fire is manifestly in us and not in the fire, for it gives pleasure and pain, "whereas in the coal there is no such thing." The "paradox" is now a familiar truth. Hobbes seems to go beyond his immediate successors. They would admit that the so-called "secondary qualities," colour, and so forth, are purely subjective; but the primary qualities, space and solidity, seemed to have superior claim to "objective reality." Hobbes observes that place and time, that is to say, magnitude and duration, "are only our own fancies of a body simply so called"; that is, of a body considered without reference to its other properties.

All our knowledge of phenomena depends upon the senses, and what the senses present to us are simply the unreal phantasms, upon which, it would seem, no

[1] In a dedicatory letter of an unprinted treatise upon optics, he says that he had stated this theory to Newcastle about 1630; and appeals to him as a witness: the same doctrine having been since published by another.

real science or body of demonstrable truths can be erected. The cause of the phantasms, again, is the "endeavour" of the organ—infinitesimal movements which take place within the length of a point. Hobbes here denies emphatically that "infinite" has any real meaning beyond "indefinite," whether indefinitely great or small. Men who profess to reason about the infinite and eternal are "not idiots, but, which makes the absurdity unpardonable, geometricians, and such as take upon them to be judges." They get entangled in words to which there is no corresponding idea, and "are forced either to speak something absurd, or, which they love worse, to hold their peace." No limits, however, may be assigned to possible greatness or smallness. Microscopes now show things a hundred thousand times bigger than they appear to bare eyes, and might be made so as to magnify each part a hundred thousand times more. So we now know that the distance from the earth to the sun is but as a point in comparison with the distance from the sun to the fixed stars. Hobbes was impressed by these recent revelations of the enormous vistas opened by early science, which have become still more impressive as science has grown. They suggested to him the impossibility of building up scientific knowledge on the direct basis of observation. Everything depends upon motion; but the motions which are causes of the phantasms or of natural phenomena are too infinitesimal to be perceived. Their existence may be inferred, but their precise nature can only be guessed. When, therefore, we proceed, from the phenomena given by sense, to the causes, we can no longer start from the definitions which, in the previous inquiry, state our

first principles. We have instead of that method to start from hypotheses. Hobbes aims at showing some "ways and means by which they [appearances] may be, I do not say they are, generated." He ends his discussion of the phenomena by declaring that the hypotheses which he has assumed are "both possible and easy to be comprehended," and that he has reasoned rightly from them. "If any other man will demonstrate the same and greater things from other hypotheses, there will be greater praise and thanks due to him than I demand for myself, provided his hypotheses are conceivable." At any rate he has got rid of empty words, such as "substantial forms," "incorporeal substances," "antipathy," "sympathy," and "occult quality."

So far it seems that Hobbes's method was that of modern sciences. Their aim, like his, is to give a mathematical theory of the various natural forces, such as heat, light, and electricity. They begin by a hypothesis about atoms and molecules which must be conceivable, and represent such properties of matter as we know to exist, although no direct observations can reveal them. If, again, these assumptions enable us to formulate the observed "laws," and to predict what will happen in other cases, and if no other assumptions can satisfy the conditions, we regard the successful assumptions as proved, or at least as provisionally established, though, it may be, in need of modification or of some further assumptions which may make them more complete. The difference is that the vast improvement both in instruments of observation and in methods of mathematical calculation enable us to apply incomparably more searching

tests to our hypotheses, as well as to gain confidence from the reciprocal support given to each other by different departments of investigation. Hobbes had to be vague and audacious, and make erroneous physical assumptions. He was still in the period of Descartes's vortices, and could not anticipate Newton's theory of gravitation.

His physical speculations have therefore no interest, except as specimens of the early guessing with which men had to be content at the dawn of science. The general conception of the possibility of working out mathematical theories of physical sciences shows that he was fully awake to the most important movement of thought in his own day, and ready, in spite of his odd misconceptions, to adopt the results of the great teachers, such as Galileo and Harvey. But we have now to look at another point. The "motions" or "endeavours" in the bodily organs which generate the phantasms of the senses, generate also, as he remarks, "another kind of sense . . . namely, the sense of pleasure and pain," which he fancies to proceed from the action of the heart. This doctrine he takes to be favoured by Harvey's discovery. It is clear, however, that here we come to a difficulty. What we know directly are the phantasms: the sensations of light, heat, and so forth, or the pleasures and pains which are indissolubly connected with certain sense-given phenomena. Now if we could discover what are the motions which take place when we see or hear or feel pain or pleasure, there is still a gap, corresponding to his remark about the τὸ φαίνεσθαι. Why a sensation of light should follow a motion in the optic nerve, or pain or pleasure be connected with

certain changes in the organism, remains a mystery. That, in fact, is the difficulty which has been awaiting him all along. When he comes to his theory of human nature, he still tries to connect his doctrine with his general theory of motion in the nerves, but is forced to rely to some extent upon empirical psychology. He knows how men will act in given circumstances, not because he can deduce the action from any theory about the bodily organism, but because he observes that, as a matter of fact, such and such things are painful or pleasurable and lead to aversion and desire. He puts the case himself in a remarkable passage. The natural philosopher, as we have seen, must begin from geometry; "civil and moral philosophy" properly depend upon natural. But, he says, "the causes of the motions of the mind are known, not only by ratiocination, but also by the experience of every man that takes the pains to observe those motions within himself." Therefore we may either take the "synthetical method," and from "the very first principles of philosophy" deduce "the causes and necessity of creating commonwealths"; or, even without knowing geometry and physics, we may attain the principles of civil philosophy by the "analytical" method. The synthetical method proceeds from "motions of the mind"; the knowledge of these motions, again, follows from knowledge of "sense or imagination," and ultimately depends upon geometry. But the analytical method starts from a knowledge of law as dependent upon "power": of power as derived from the wills of the men "that constitute such power," and that again from a knowledge of men's appetites and passions. That knowledge is to be derived from every man's

experience if he will but "examine his own mind." That is fortunate. If we had to deduce the nature of government and of right and wrong from geometry or physics, we should have to wait a long time for any satisfactory results. The materialist theory remains in Hobbes's mind as a self-evident truth, and has a very important influence upon his speculations. But his real method is different. That will appear hereafter.

CHAPTER III

MAN[1]

1. *Psychology*

MAN is a body with certain organs. Other bodies coming into contact with the organs of sense propagate motions through the nerves to the brain and heart. The reactions or "endeavours" set up in the central organs generate the sensations or phantasms which constitute the whole mental world. We are directly conscious of nothing else, although they enable us to perceive what happens "outside of the mind." The laws of motion, again, tell us that a thing once in motion "will be eternally in motion unless somewhat else stay it." "Whatever hindereth it will

[1] The second part of Hobbes's philosophy considered in this chapter is expounded in the early chapters of the *Leviathan* (vol. iii. of English works) and the *Human Nature*. The last, originally published in 1650, consists of the first thirteen chapters of the treatise written in 1640. The later part of the same treatise also appeared in 1650 as *De Corpore Politico*. These two form the fourth volume of the English works. A later treatise, *De Homine*, in Latin, appeared in 1658, but adds nothing to the earlier books. Hobbes never found himself able to give the fuller exposition which he had intended of the doctrines summarised in the *Human Nature* and the *Leviathan*; but he states the essence with sufficient terseness and clearness.

take some time to destroy the motion." "Though the wind cease, the waves give not over rolling for a long time after; so also it happeneth in that motion which is made in the internal parts of a man, then, when he sees, dreams, etc." The "image" thus formed remains for a time after the object is removed, and the faculty of retaining such images is therefore called "the imagination." Imagination is therefore "nothing but decaying sense." All knowledge and thought thus correspond to the action and reaction between the living body and the bodies which impinge upon it. Knowledge, therefore, is entirely constructed from experience, or from the action set up from outside, although the organised body has the power of reacting and so generating the phantasms which compose the "imaginary" or mental world. The problem which Hobbes now considers is how the mind or brain comes to systematise this varying play of imagery and to acquire both general truths and rules which govern conduct. We have already seen what is the logic which is worked out by the help of language; but we have also to consider man as an acting and feeling being. We must understand not only his methods of reasoning but the motives which govern his conduct.

Although Hobbes holds that the phantasms are caused by the internal motions, this cause does not really help us much to explain the effect. We have to look at the phantasms themselves. Hobbes is naturally much interested by the phenomena of dreaming, for dreams are entirely made up of phantasms. We catch the phantasms, so to speak, by themselves, shifting, combining, and behaving according to their own purpose. Sleep is a "privation of the act of sense." The power

to feel remains, but its activity is suspended for the time. Consequently the phantasms are not suppressed or modified by the intrusion of images from without. They are made up entirely of past images, though combined in new and apparently arbitrary ways. Sometimes they continue the train of images of the waking state, but they also seem to spring up of themselves. The explanation is, that there is a reciprocal action between the vital organs and the phantasms. "Sad imaginations nourish the spleen, and a strong spleen reciprocally causeth fearful dreams." When we are awake fear causes cold, and when we are asleep cold causes fear, and therefore "dreams of ghosts." This leads to an important result which will meet us again. Fear, "helped a little with stories of such apparitions, causes guilty men in the night and in hallowed places to see terrible phantasms which they mistake for real ghosts and incorporeal substances." Our dreams are thus the reverse of our waking imaginations: the motion when we are awake beginning at one end, and when we dream at the other. The absence of interfering sensations, again, makes the phantasms as clear as the waking impressions; and as they appear to be always present and we do not remember or reflect, strange things in dreams cause no wonder. Finally, the incoherence of our dreams distinguishes them sufficiently from the phantasms which, when we are awake, inform us of a present reality. When dreaming we do not know that we are not awake, but when we are awake we are quite sure that we are not dreaming. "We do not dream of the absurdities of our waking thoughts," but when awake we perceive the incoherence of our

dreams. In dreams "our thoughts appear like the stars between flying clouds, not in the order in which a man would choose to observe them, but as the uncertain order of flying clouds permits."

What is it, then, that gives this colouring to our waking thoughts? "Not every thought to every thought succeeds indifferently." Our images are relics of past sense impressions, and, moreover, they succeed in the same order in which their originals succeeded. One follows the other "as water upon a plane table is drawn which way any one part is guided by the finger." But we have experience of images succeeding in the most various orders. There is, therefore, no certainty as to what image will succeed another at a given time, although it is certain that the order is one in which we have previously experienced them. Thus thoughts seem "impertinent to one another" as in a dream. Yet even in this "wild ranging of the mind" we may often perceive the guiding cause. "For in a discourse of our present civil war what could seem more impertinent than to ask, as one did, what is the value of a Roman penny. Yet the coherence to me was manifest enough. For the thought of the war introduced the thought of the delivering up of the king to his enemies; the thought of that thought brought in the thought of the delivering up of Christ; and that again the thought of the thirty pence, which was the price of that treason; and thence easily followed that malicious question, and all this in a moment of time, for thought is quick." This passage, quoted by all critics of Hobbes, is a fine specimen of his pregnant style. G. H. Lewes remarks that a popular rhetorician would have expanded the last

four words into a paragraph. A Scottish professor would have proceeded to quote Akenside. It is also remarkable as an illustration of the doctrine of the "association of ideas" which was to become so prominent with Hobbes's successors. It has been pointed out, indeed, that Hobbes was not the first person to notice a phenomenon which had already been observed by Aristotle. Nor has it with him the importance which it assumed in later years. Hume declared that the association of ideas was in mental phenomena what gravitation was in astronomy, and Hartley's later application of the doctrine to the moral as well as the intellectual nature became the guiding principle of the later empirical school in England. Hartley's "vibratiuncles" play the same part as Hobbes's "endeavours," and in both cases the physiological theory, which professes to give the ground of the phenomena, is rather deduced from the phenomena themselves than independently ascertained. The "association of ideas" remained when the vibratiuncles were dropped. To Hartley's followers it seemed that the whole theory of knowledge depended upon a thorough carrying out of this principle. Logic in general seemed to them to be derivable from "association of ideas." Though Hobbes certainly did not foresee this application of his statement, his use of the observation is important. The "trains of thoughts," as he says, are of two kinds: the first is "unguided"; when thoughts are directed by association, and the succession appears to be as casual as in a dream: the second is "regulated by some desire or design." The unregulated give us the kind of knowledge which would be described by Hume as attributable to the

association of ideas. We remember things as antecedent and consequent, and this remembrance is an "experiment," whether made voluntarily, as when we put a thing in the fire to see what will happen, or "not made," as when we remember a fair morning after a cold evening. When we have often observed such a sequence we expect its repetition, and from this comes the kind of knowledge which we call "prudence." If the sign has preceded the event in a required number of cases, it may justify us in betting twenty to one that an event will happen, but never justifies a certainty, which belongs to science alone.

At this stage, then, cause and effect are represented simply by sequence—the sole meaning, according to the later empiricists, of cause and effect. Now when a man desires some end, he thinks of the means which will produce it. This kind of thinking Hobbes takes to be common to man and beast, though it is man alone who is capable of following the reverse method of deducing effects from causes. That method is peculiar to truly scientific reasoning. The "discourse of the mind," when directed by design, may lead to either process. A man has lost something, and his mind runs back from place to place and time to time to find when and where he had it, for he knows the place in which he is to seek, and "his thoughts run over all the parts thereof in the same manner as one would sweep a room to find a jewel, or as a spaniel ranges a field till he find a scent, or as a man should run over the alphabet to start a rhyme." In other cases a man comes to know what event will follow an action. He wishes to know, for example, what will be the consequence of committing a crime. He assumes that

like events will follow like actions; and so he thinks of the sequence of "the crime, the officer, the prison, the judge, and the gallows." That is a course of reflection which, as Hobbes undeniably says, is likely to result in "prudence." Here again Hobbes emphasises a distinction between "prudence" and "science," or between merely empirical and necessary truth. He therefore introduces at this point his theory of names and "computation"—the method by which science is elaborated. But when he is taking the psychological rather than the logical view, and considering how as a matter of fact knowledge is developed, he makes the distinction less absolute. Science "after all" is a development of "prudence."[1] Both kinds of knowledge, he says in the *Human Nature*, "are but experience," though science depends upon the "proper use of names in language." This, however, implies the "concomitance of conception with words: for if words alone were sufficient, a parrot might be taught as well to know truth as to speak it. Evidence is to truth, as the sap to the tree, which so far as it creepeth along with the body and branches keepeth them alive; where it forsaketh them, they die; for this evidence, which is meaning with our words, is the life of truth." So in the *Leviathan* he remarks that children before they can speak are not properly reasonable, and most men are little better. Having no science or knowledge of consequences, they still resemble children, who are made to believe that their new brothers and sisters are found in the garden. Such natural "prudence," indeed, is better than false rules. "The light of

[1] See chapter vi. of *Human Nature*, and chapter v. of *Leviathan*.

human reason is perspicuous words, but by exact definitions first snuffed and purged from ambiguity. *Reason* is the *pace*; increase of science the *way*; and the benefit of mankind the *end*." The ability of the man who has natural dexterity with his weapon is to the ability of the man who has thoroughly acquired the art of fencing, as prudence to "sapience" (*sapientia*, that is, or science). "Both (abilities) are useful; but the latter infallible." Those, meanwhile, who trust to books and follow the blind blindly are "like him that, trusting to the false rules of a master of fence, ventures presumptuously upon an adversary that either kills or disgraces him." Thus in any business where we have no "infallible science," it is better to follow our "natural judgment than to be guided by general sentences read in authors." Politicians love to show their reading in councils, but very few do it in their domestic affairs: having prudence enough at home, though in "public they study more the reputation of their own wit than the success of another's business." The accurate knowledge which comes with a "proper use of names" is therefore, as it would seem, not dependent upon "arbitrary conventions" as to names, but a refinement and articulate organisation of the simple conceptions out of which mere prudence or a system of empirical knowledge is constructed.

Another point has now to be considered. Trains of thought are "regulated" by the presence of some aim or desire. The wild ranging of the mind represented by dreams or mere "association of ideas" is then directed to a single end. We have noticed sequences, such as the crime, the prison, the gallows; and when we desire, we think of the means which will produce the

desirable result, and then of the means to those means. What then is a desire? All conceptions and apparitions are really "motion in some internal substance of the head." The motion "not stopping there but proceeding to the heart, of necessity must there either help or hinder the motion which is called *vital*: when it helpeth it is called *delight*, *contentment*, or *pleasure*, which is nothing really but motion about the heart, as conception is nothing but motion in the head." When, on the contrary, the vital motion is hindered, the hindering motion is called pain. The physiology is of course absurd, but the theory thus accepted is remarkable. The same doctrine appears in Spinoza's *Ethics*, where it becomes the foundation of his famous account of the passions, held by many critics to be his masterpiece. Sir F. Pollock in his admirable exposition observes that, according to Spinoza, "Pleasure marks the rising and pain the lowering of the vital energies." That phrase would serve equally as an equivalent for the words just quoted from Hobbes. Sir F. Pollock points out, again, that this doctrine has been accepted by Mr. Herbert Spencer and other modern thinkers. That pleasure and pain must in some way correspond to heighten or lower vitality is a doctrine which in some form or other becomes more essential with the acceptance of evolution. It is quite clear that while animals, human or other, seek for the pleasurable and avoid the painful, a being which acted upon the opposite plan would be in a very bad way. A race which hated food and took delight in being eaten would speedily be extinguished in the struggle for existence. Spinoza bases his theory upon his general principle—everything that is endeavours to

persist in its own being "*in suo esse perseverare conatur.*" Hobbes's acceptance of the law that the motion of a thing will persist unless altered by some other thing implies a perception of the same principle. Meanwhile he insists (in the *Human Nature*) upon another point of great importance.

"Ends," he says, may be near at hand or further off: those which are nearer are called "means" to the further. "But for an utmost end, in which the ancient philosophers have placed *felicity*, there is no such thing in this world, nor way to it, more than to Utopia: for while we live we have desires, and desire presupposeth a further end." There can, he infers, "be no contentment but in proceeding." We are not to marvel, therefore, when we see that as men attain to one end, "their appetite continually groweth" and they pursue some other. "Of those that have attained to the highest degree of honour and riches, some have affected mastery in some art; as Nero in music and poetry, Commodus in the art of a gladiator"; some kind of diversion, whether in play or business is still required; and men justly complain of a great grief that they know not what to do. "Felicity, therefore, by which we mean continual delight, consisteth *not* in having prospered but in prospering." This states a really valuable doctrine. Everything, we have seen, is motion: knowledge implies perpetual motion, the whole world-process is a continuous transformation of one system of motions into another; and life, of course, is essentially motion. To wish, therefore, for "Utopia," which excludes change, is to wish for something inconsistent with life and radically inconceivable. Hobbes constantly ridicules the scholastic doctrine of

eternity as a "*nunc stans*," a state which has no relation to time. That is one of his favourite illustrations of the use of meaningless words. The universe *is* change. He answers by anticipation an argument which finds favour with modern pessimists. Life, they suggest, is essentially misery, because we are always desiring, and desire implies want. The inference involves a fallacy. Time never stands still, and we are always moving on. We cannot sit down upon a solid lump of pleasure outside of time and change. We cannot imagine such a thing, for the words have no real meaning. Every end is also a beginning, and to think of the future is to desire. But desire is not necessarily painful. It does not imply dissatisfaction with the present, but only a hope that the change may lead in a certain direction. If the conditions of future fruition appear to be present, the expectation of change is itself delightful. We have, in Hobbes's language, appetites and aversions. Appetite is an endeavour towards an "object which delighteth." "Pleasure, love, and appetite are divers names for divers considerations of the same things." Opposed to "appetite" is "aversion," which "moves us when the object displeaseth." Happiness implies, therefore, such a process as involves a continuous activity of the vital powers and not an impossible and inconceivable state of changelessness. We cannot arrest time or cease the change, but we may be continually moving along the line of greatest vigour and happiness. This again seems to be often overlooked by Hobbes's disciples, the later utilitarians. Bentham is apt to talk about "lots" of happiness, as if happiness were a solid thing capable of being accumulated like coins in

a bag. Life is a continuous process in which pain or pleasure may predominate, but its value is to be measured, not by the sum of things possessed, but by the nature of the energy evolved in possessing them.

This leads to Hobbes's theory of the passions, which, though characteristic, can hardly be described, like Spinoza's, as a "masterpiece." He has defined passion as "the motion about the heart," which is a consequence of "the motion of the brain," which we call conception. He has therefore "obliged himself to search out and declare from what conception proceedeth every one of the passions which are commonly taken notice of." The course of this inquiry is curious. He begins by a brief account of the sensual pains and pleasures. Among them are the pleasures of hearing. Galileo has done something towards explaining the pleasures of harmony; but "I confess that I know not," says Hobbes, "for what reason one succession in tone and measure is more pleasant than another." He conjectures that some airs imitate and revive a former passion; "for no air pleaseth but for a time, no more doth imitation." There is, however, "another delight by the ear," peculiar to musicians, namely, a "rejoicing of their own skill." Of this nature he says "are the passions of which I am to speak next." He is really dropping the attempt to give a scientific classification of the passions in order to dwell upon certain emotions interesting for the purpose of his political theories.

He begins from a sufficiently wide proposition. The expectation that anything will happen hereafter implies the knowledge that there is something present which has power to produce it; that knowledge being

derived from our remembrance of the past. "Wherefore all conception of the future is conception of power able to produce something. Whoever, therefore, expecteth pleasure to come must conceive withal some power in himself by which the same may be attained." When we desire a pleasure, we no doubt conceive ourselves to have the power of enjoying it. We may perhaps desire something, while recognising that under the circumstances it is impossible, as, according to the poet, the moth may desire the star. But desire as determining action, "the beginning of animal motion towards something that pleaseth us," supposes that we can enjoy and that we can act so as to procure the enjoyment or the chance of it. This, however, does not appear to throw much light upon the nature of desire or of the special passions. Hobbes proceeds to explain that by "power" he means all the faculties of body and mind, and, besides these, all such further power as is by them obtained, such as riches, authority, friendship, and good fortune. However little the general position can help us in "searching out" the nature of the various passions, it shows what really is in Hobbes's mind. Since man is a desiring animal, and reaches one end only to anticipate further ends, he seeks not only to gratify some particular passion, but to obtain whatever may enable him to gain pleasure and avoid pain of all kinds. He has various capacities for enjoyment, and necessarily desires all the power which may enable him to go on enjoying as much as possible. "Favour," riches, and so forth, are means towards continuing a pleasant life. He adds a significant remark: "And because the power of one man resisteth and hindereth the effects of the power of

another, *power* simply is no more but the *excess* of the power of one above that of another; for equal powers opposed destroy one another, and such opposition is called *contention.*" It is clear that the meaning of "power" has become restricted. It no longer means anything which enables us to enjoy or to secure the means of enjoyment, but that kind of power which enables us to get a larger share than our neighbours. He is not thinking, for example, of the power of performing on the lute which gave him enjoyment when he was locked up in his bedroom, but of the power which enabled him to have a room to himself and keep out the burglars who might have knocked him on the head. Power is the ability of the individual to get as large a share as possible of the good things that may be going.

He proceeds to give definitions of a great number of painful and pleasurable emotions. What we obtain from him, however, is not properly a general theory of the passions, but a not very systematic list of the various emotions as determined by the relations between a man and the society in which he lives. Such as it is, however, his list suggests to him a number of characteristic and pungent sayings which have a bearing upon his political theory, and are often, it must be admitted, more forcible than edifying. The order of exposition, I may remark, is clearer in the *Human Nature* than in the *Leviathan.*

Since all desire implies desire for "power," the recognition of the power belonging to ourselves or others is an essential element in our relations to each other. The "acknowledgment of power is called *Honour,*" and to honour a man is to conceive that he

has an "excess of power above him with whom he contendeth." All the signs of "power" are therefore honourable. Beauty of person or "general reputation among those of the other sex" is honourable as an indication of personal vigour. Actions which show strength of body, as victory in battle or duel, are honourable. *Avoir tué son homme* is an honour. So is a readiness to great exploits, for confidence gives a presumption of real power; and to teach is honourable as a sign of knowledge; and riches as a sign of the power that acquired them; and authority as a sign of the strength, wisdom, favour or riches by which it is acquired. Good fortune is honourable because a sign of the favour of God, to whom is to be ascribed all that cometh to us by fortune, no less than that we attain unto by industry. Gravity is honourable when a sign of "a mind employed on something else," employment being a sign of power. It is dishonourable when affected. For the gravity of the former kind is like a ship laden with merchandise, but of the latter like the steadiness of a ship ballasted with sand and other trash. Honour is the manifestation of the value we set on one another. The value or worth of a man is, as of all other things, his price: that is to say, as much as would be given for the use of his power; and therefore this value is not absolute, but a thing dependent on the need and judgment of another. So a good soldier is more valuable in war than in peace, while the reverse is true of a learned and uncorrupt judge. As in other things, so in men, not the seller but the buyer determines the price. For, let men, as most men do, rate themselves at the highest value they can, yet their true value is no more than it is esteemed

by others. Moreover, honour consisteth only in the opinion of "power." If an action be great and difficult and therefore a proof of great power, it matters not whether it be just or unjust. The ancients thought they were honouring their gods by ascribing to them great though unjust acts; as in the Homeric hymn, Mercury's greatest praise is that "being born in the morning, he had invented music at noon, and before night stolen away the cattle of Apollo." Piracy was thought honourable by the Greeks, and at the present time "private duels are and always will be honourable, though unlawful, till such time as there shall be honour ordained for them that refuse, and ignominy for them that make the challenge." Duels often show courage, and therefore "strength and skill, which are power," though for the most part, he admits, they are the effects of rash speech and the "fear of dishonour." Hobbes was the last man to insist that duelling should be honoured; but that it was honoured is indisputable, and he is simply considering the fact.

The desire for power implies the desire for honour: the recognition of power by ourselves or others, for that is itself power. We have next to notice the passions which correspond to honour. The first is "glory or internal gloriation or triumph of the mind." This means the conception of our own power as compared with the power of "him that contendeth against us." "By those whom it displeaseth this passion is called pride; by those whom it pleaseth it is called a just valuation of oneself." When the "imagination of our power" arises from experience of our own actions, it is just and well-grounded, and prompts aspiring to higher degrees of power. When it arises from the

trusting other people's opinions, it becomes "false glory," and leads to mistaken ambition. Sometimes glory depends upon fiction, as when we imagine ourselves to be the hero of some romance. This begets no aspiration, and is "vain glory" when, "like the fly on the axletree, a man exclaims, 'What a dust do I raise.'" He illustrates it elsewhere from the gallant madness of Don Quixote, "which is nothing else but an expression of such height of vain glory as reading of romance may produce on pusillanimous men." It is shown by "affectation of fashions," and "usurping the signs of virtues" not really possessed. The opposite passion to glory is called "humility" by those by whom it is approved, and by others "dejection." "If well-grounded, it produceth fear to attempt anything rashly; if ill, it utterly cows a man, that he neither dares speak publicly nor expect success in any action."

Another passion of which Hobbes takes himself to have given the first explanation is marked by that "distortion of the countenance which we call laughter." The cause of laughter is not wit, "for men laugh at mischances and indecencies wherein there lieth no wit nor jest at all." What moves laughter must be something "new and unexpected." Men, especially if "greedy of applause," laugh at unexpected success in their actions and at their own jests. They laugh again at jests which elegantly discover the absurdity of another man. They do not laugh when they themselves or their friends are the objects of jesting. Laughter, then, is caused by "sudden glory": the discovery of some superiority in ourselves to other people. The popularity of this phrase shows, I fancy,

that Hobbes has more or less hit the mark.[1] It is only fair to add his remark that the passion "is incident most to them that are conscious of the fewest abilities in themselves; who are forced to keep themselves in their own favour by observing the imperfections of other men. And therefore much laughter at the defects of others is a sign of pusillanimity. For of great minds one of the proper works is to help and free others from scorn, and compare themselves only with the most able." We should only laugh "when all the company may laugh together," as "at absurdities abstracted from persons." That is a fair test of the innocence of laughter, with which Chesterfield might agree.

The attempt to analyse the passions into some form of the desire for power or honour has less edifying consequences. Hobbes, we discover, is the most thoroughgoing of egoists, and not only admits the universality of self-love, but speaks as though this were one of the obvious truths which require no proof or explanation. "Pity," he observes with superlative calmness, is imagination or fiction of future calamity to ourselves, proceeding from the sense of another man's calamity. We pity those who suffer an undeserved calamity, "because then there appeareth more probability that the same may happen to us: for the evil that happeneth to an innocent man may happen to every man." That is why men pity those whom they love; for whom they love they think worthy of good and therefore not worthy of calamity. This may suggest the question, "What is the meaning

[1] It is discussed by Professor Sully in his recent book upon humour.

of love?" He discusses this in the *Human Nature*, though he apparently does not think it worthy of consideration in the *Leviathan*. Love in the most general sense means simply the "delight" caused by an object which helps the vital motion, hatred having the corresponding relation to pain. This, he says, sufficiently explains the love which men have to one another, or the pleasure which they take in each other's company, which entitles them to be called "sociable." To love men means that we think of them as useful. Of love in the narrower sense, or the passion which is "the great theme of poets," he observes that, in spite of their "praises," it means the lover's "need," not any special quality in the object beloved. "Those are most successful in love who care least, which not perceiving many men cast away their services as one arrow after another till, in the end, together with their hopes they lose their wits." Hobbes is not very clear at this point—perhaps he was a little shy of "the poets"—but he does not appear to take a romantic view of the question. Another variety of love is more properly called "good will or charity." This is a modification, again, of the desire for power. Nothing can convince a man of his own power more completely than the discovery that he is able not only to accomplish his own desires but also to assist other men in theirs. This is the secret of "the natural affection of parents to their children (which the Greeks call στοργή)," as also of the affection implied in "assisting those who adhere to us." When, however, men bestow benefits upon strangers, they do not act from charity; but either seek to "purchase friendship" by contract, or seek peace from fear. We act for the good of others, it

seems, either from the complacency derived from the evidence of our own power, which is properly "charity," or in order to buy their services. Hobbes speaks as if his view were not only obvious, but edifying—as though he were simply elaborating St. Paul's famous description of the Christian virtue of charity.

Another passion is more intelligible to him. Since "knowledge is power," we naturally desire to extend our knowledge. The corresponding passion is called "admiration," and the "appetite" is "curiosity." Its existence, like the faculty of language, marks the point at which we part company from beasts. The beast flies from or approaches a new object, only considering whether it will "serve his turn." The man endeavours to discover the cause. Hence arises all philosophy, which is, as we know, the theory of consequences in general. A man in chase of riches or power ("which in respect of knowledge are but sensuality") does not care about the motions of the stars: it is only a few, as he remarks elsewhere, who appreciate science, "for science is of that nature as none can understand it to be, except such as in a good measure have attained unto it." The military arts are of obvious utility and their possessors are powerful. "Though the true mother of them be science, namely the mathematics; yet because they are brought into light by the hand of the artificer, they be esteemed (the mid-wife passing with the vulgar for the mother) as his issue." Hobbes can preach with feeling on the superiority of philosophical inquiry to the mere bread-winning studies. Meanwhile "curiosity is delight; therefore also novelty is so; but especially that novelty from which

a man conceiveth an opinion true or false of bettering his estate; for in such case they stand affected with the hope that all gamesters have while the cards are shuffling." That no doubt expresses a very genuine sentiment. Though science is power, he would say, the man of science has very little honour, unless he can apply his science to generally intelligible ends. "Curiosity" and reason distinguish man from beasts; "which makes me, when I hear a man upon the discovery of any new and ingenious knowledge or invention ask gravely, that is to say scornfully, *what 'tis good for*, meaning what money it will bring in, to esteem that man not sufficiently removed from brutality." Love of philosophic truth, one is glad to observe, appears to Hobbes to be admirable for itself, though perhaps at some cost of consistency.

The curious argument which follows is of some interest. What, he asks, is the cause of the great difference between men's capacities? It cannot be a difference in the "natural temper of the brain" for, if so, the difference would show itself "in the senses"; whereas wise men and foolish have (as he assumes) equal senses. Imagination being "decaying sense," the imagination ought to be equal. The difference is therefore owing to the differences in the constitution "of the body." What helps the "vital constitution" in one man, and is therefore pleasurable, hinders it in another, and is therefore painful. He discusses the "intellectual virtues"—meaning, the qualities which are desired "for eminence" and are gauged by "comparison"; for "if all things were equal in all men, nothing would be prized." The great difference between men's wits is due to a difference in "quick-

ness," or "swift succession of one thought to another," and in "steadiness of direction to some approved end." A defect of quickness is "dullness or stupidity"; and the difference is due to the difference of the passions. Desire for power, riches, knowledge, or honour (the last three being modifications of the first) is thus the great cause of the "difference of wit." A man who has no great passion for any of these things may be good in the sense of inoffensive; "yet he cannot possibly have either a great fancy or much judgment. For the thoughts are to the desires as scouts and spies, to range abroad and find the way to the things desired—all steadiness of the mind's motion and all quickness of the same proceeding from thence; for as to have no desire is to be dead, so to have weak passions is dullness; and to have passions indifferently for everything is giddiness and distraction"; while abnormal vehemence of passion is madness. That intellectual excellence is dependent upon the character and the strength of the emotions is a doctrine upon which Hobbes rightly and impressively insists. Fancy, according to him, means quickness in perceiving "similitudes"; and judgment or "discretion" quickness in perceiving "dissimilitudes." Fancy must be "eminent" in poetry, though judgment is required; while in history fancy is wanted only to "adorn the style." In demonstration, "judgment does all," except that "an apt similitude" may be required to open the understanding. "Discretion" is required in poetry; an "anatomist or physician" may speak of "unclean things"; "but for another man to write his extravagant or pleasant fancies of the same is as if a man from being tumbled in the dirt should come and present himself

before good company." This is a doctrine for which Hobbes might have found plenty of contemporary and other illustrations. An excessive "mobility of mind," again, maketh men depart "from their discourse by a parenthesis, and from that parenthesis by another, till at length they either lose themselves, or make their narration like a dream or some studied nonsense." He would not have enjoyed *Sordello*. "Madness" is a general name for "all passions that produce strange and unusual behaviour." It is especially conspicuous in a multitude, he says, answering by anticipation a famous query of Bishop Butler. "For what argument of madness can there be greater than to clamour, strike and throw stones at our best friends? Yet this is somewhat less than such a multitude will do. For they will clamour, fight against and destroy those by whom all their lifetime before they have been protected and secured from injury. And if this be madness in the multitude, it is the same in every particular man." Each particle of water "contributes as much to the roaring of the sea" as any other drop, and the same is true of the "seditious roaring of a troubled nation."

Such remarks, though characteristic, are more or less digressions from the main purpose, to which he returns in a chapter upon "the difference of manners" in the *Leviathan*. By manners, he tells us, he does not mean "points of the *small morals*"—social etiquette—but the qualities of mankind that concern their living together in "peace and unity." In other words, he will ask how the passions of the individual bear upon the political order. Since felicity, as we have seen, "is a continual progress of the desire from one object

to the other," all men desire both to procure and assure a contented life. Unluckily they differ as to the way, from the diversity of passions or difference in knowledge. In the first place, therefore, he will "put for a general inclination of all mankind, a perpetual and restless desire of power after power, that endeth only in death." It is not that a man can always hope for a greater delight, but because he cannot be assured of "the means to live which he hath at present without the acquisition of more." "Competition of riches, honour, command, or other power inclineth to contention, enmity, and war; because the way of one competitor to the attaining of his desire is to kill, subdue, supplant, or repel the other." Particularly "competition of praise," as he rather oddly adds, "inclineth to a reverence of antiquity. For men contend with the living, not with the dead; to these ascribing more than due, that they may obscure the glory of the other." Desire of "ease" disposeth men to obedience, and so does desire of knowledge and the arts of peace, for such desire "containeth a desire of leisure." Desire of fame "disposeth to laudable actions," even of "fame after death." For though after death we have no sense of praise on earth, men have a present delight therein from foresight of it, and of the benefit to their posterity; which though they see not, yet they "imagine," and everything that is a pleasure to the sense, the same also is pleasure in the imagination. Receiving benefits from an equal "disposeth to counterfeit love, but really secret hatred; and puts a man into the estate of a desperate debtor that, in declining the sight of his creditor, tacitly wishes him there where he might never see him more.

For benefits oblige, and obligation is thraldom; and an unrequitable obligation perpetual thraldom, which is to one's equal hateful." Obligation to a recognised superior, however, "inclines to love," for it can be requited by gratitude, and so long as there is a hope of requital, we are disposed to love even an equal or inferior benefactor; the obligation is then mutual; "from whence proceedeth an emulation of who shall exceed in benefiting; the most noble and profitable contention possible; wherein the victor is pleased with his victory, and the other revenged by confessing it." Ignorance "disposeth men to take on trust not only the truth they know not, but also the errors and, which is more, the nonsense of them they trust." Ignorance of the nature of right, in particular, "disposeth a man to think that unjust which it hath been the custom to punish, and that just, of the impunity and approbation whereof they can produce an example or, as the lawyers, which only use this false measure of justice, barbarously call it, a precedent." Such men "set themselves against reason as often as reason is against them; which is the cause that the doctrine of right and wrong is perpetually disputed both by the pen and the sword; whereas the doctrine of lines and figures is not so." Truth in geometry "crosses no man's ambition, profit, or lust." "For I doubt not but if it had been a thing contrary to any man's right of dominion, or to the interest of men that have dominion, *that the three angles of a triangle should be equal to two angles of a square*, that doctrine should have been, if not disputed, yet by the burning of all books of geometry suppressed, as far as he whom it concerned was able."

The quaint passage in the *Human Nature* which concludes this account of the passions sums up his view. Life, he says, may be compared to a race—a race which has no other "goal" or "garland" than "being foremost." "In it to endeavour is *appetite*; to be remiss is *sensuality*: to consider them behind is *glory*: to consider them before is *humility*: . . . to fall on the sudden is disposition to *weep*: to see another fall is disposition to *laugh*: to see one outgone whom we would not, is *pity*: to see one outgo whom we would not is *indignation*: to hold fast by another is *love*: to carry him on that so holdeth is *charity*: to hurt oneself for haste is *shame*: . . . continually to be outgone is *misery*: continually to outgo the next before is *felicity*: and to forsake the course is to *die*."

Life, we see, is essentially competition, though as yet the struggle for existence is regarded as only affecting the individual. Hobbes, it will probably appear to most people, takes a sufficiently cynical view of human nature. He has been compared to Rochefoucauld, though he does not represent the epigrammatic skill which is gained in highly polished society. He has frequented Mersenne's "cell," not the courtier's *salon*. His opinions might be compared to the so-called Machiavellianism of Bacon's essays—the concentration of the experience of the statesman and lawyer, who wishes to see things as they are and to get rid of humbug and conventional gloss. Hobbes, however, has a more distinctly scientific aim, and wishes at least to connect his remarks with psychological theory. He would defend himself against the charge that he is taking an "unworthy" view of mankind by appealing to plain facts. Men, he would say, are stupid and selfish.

That, no doubt, is not the way to be popular. The "idealist" often takes a more painful view of men as they are, than the poor "cynic"; but he atones for it by an enthusiastic view of what they may become, and his readers catch the contagion of his enthusiasm. Their perception of the general corruption convinces them that they at any rate are of the salt of the earth, and this is comforting. If Hobbes's cynicism meant simply that he recognised the great part played by dullness and selfishness in human affairs, and the futility of overlooking that fact in political theories, we might say that he was applying a wholesome corrective to extravagant belief in millenniums.

It must be granted, however, that he goes beyond this. His quiet resolution of all the virtues into forms of egoism was of course condemned by the respectable. In our eyes it may be redeemed by the charming simplicity and utter unconsciousness of offence with which he propounds his atrocious theories. He becomes unintentionally humorous. We must, however, notice the nature of the reasoning which leads him to such conclusions. That is implied by one characteristic doctrine. Every man, he says, calls that which pleaseth him good, and that which displeaseth him evil. Since men differ in "constitution," they differ as to what is good and what is evil. There is no such thing as "absolute goodness considered without relation." Even God's goodness means His goodness to us. The words "good" and "evil," he says elsewhere, "are ever used with reference to us." No "common rule" can be taken "from the nature of the objects themselves." Such a rule must be made by the man himself, or by the "commonwealth," or by

some arbitrator set up by consent. It is indeed quite clear that from Hobbes's point of view the abstract words "good" and "evil" could have no meaning. As "man" only means John and Thomas and Peter, "good" only means what John and Thomas and Peter like, and "evil" what they dislike. Moreover, if psychological and ethical theories are to be based upon experience, we must begin by studying the likings and dislikings of human beings. Science must start from the actual not from the ideal. A scientific theory of human nature begins from the question, what passions do in fact govern, not from the question what passions ought to govern, human beings. Now in fact men have various passions and desires which lead them to break as well as to obey rules of morality. In a dozen men we may find a Judas Iscariot as well as a St. John; and we have to account equally for both. As a physiologist has to deal with the morbid as well as the healthy, so the psychologist has to deal with the traitor as well as the saint, and with all the complex play of good and bad impulses, which make saints and criminals and men of every intervening shade. He will of course admit that, as a fact, a certain moral code comes into existence, conformity to which is regarded with approval by the average man. How it comes to be formed, and what is the nature of its authority, are questions to which Hobbes addresses himself in the political treatises, and of which he offers a very remarkable solution.

Hobbes can only say at present, that since each man is governed by his own passions and desires, the formation of the "common rule" supposes some "arbitrator" or central authority. His uncompro-

mising egoism is an inevitable consequence of his position. It is assumed by the moralists whom he attacked that there is some ultimate and absolute good: an ideal law revealed through reason and equally binding upon all men. It determines conduct, since the will always chooses the "apparent good." Reason is itself virtue, and vice means ignorance, for it is only from a mistaken view of what is really good that men fail to do right. Hobbes might agree with the doctrine that man always chooses the apparent good; but he denies that the really good is knowable. The doctrine therefore means for him that each man will do what is pleasant to himself. He is governed exclusively by his own desires, and it would be as absurd to speak of a man acting from another man's motives as to speak of his body being nourished by another man's food. Now it must be observed that later thinkers, who profess equally to base ethical theories entirely upon experience, will not admit this conclusion. They hold that sympathy is a genuine and ultimate emotion; and that man can so identify himself with the society of which he forms a part, that public spirit or patriotism or philanthropy or family affection may be as genuine a motive as the animal appetites. They hold, and, as I think, rightly, that an empirical theory of morality does not really involve the acceptance of a selfish or egoistic doctrine. But it is undeniable that this interpretation is plausible. The utilitarians could argue with great force that a tendency to produce the "greatest happiness of the greatest number" gives the true criterion of morality. But as an historical fact, they found their greatest difficulty in reconciling this with their other assump-

tion, that each man seeks his own happiness. They tried to explain "altruism" by "association," at the risk of making it a kind of desirable fallacy, or else they tried to show—what unfortunately cannot be shown—that self-sacrifice is always repaid or, in other words, is a sham sacrifice.

Hobbes had not to bother himself about such conciliation. He was perfectly content to profess the most unblushing egoism and carry it out consistently. His essential aim was to be scientific, to accept the obvious facts, and to carry out the conclusions logically. His nominalism naturally went with individualism. Each man obviously is a separate thing which must be explained by its own properties, and not by reference to any mysterious bond of unity with other things. Unfortunately there is selfishness enough in the world to give much plausibility to some of his statements, and to admit of their being often approximately true. Finally, his thorough materialism seems to make the assumption of selfishness inevitable. If, indeed, it be possible to regard man as a mere mechanism, worked by the laws of motion, and yet to regard him as a self-conscious, reasoning, and remembering animal, it may also be possible to regard him as sympathetic and unselfish. Still it is difficult to see how the actions of a mere automaton, affected only by the pressure of bodies in contact with him, can be really determined by the conditions of other automata. He may be so constituted as to preserve his own equilibrium; but his relation to his like would seem to be limited to the cases in which two automata knock their heads together. Hobbes, however, had no difficulty in altogether denying the existence of sympathy.

The desire for self-preservation was quite enough to provide the working force for his scheme; and he propounds his theory with the straightforward bluntness which has the charm of obvious sincerity.

2. *Theology*

We are now pretty well prepared to proceed to the third part of Hobbes's philosophy; but there are two other applications of his first principles which have a bearing upon his political doctrine, and which also deserve consideration for themselves. We have seen what Hobbes thought of bodies; we may ask what was his creed as to the creator of bodies and the relation of the creator to man? His arguments upon theology and upon the problem of free-will excited the keenest antagonism among his contemporaries. His position in both cases is remarkable, if only as illustrating the stir which he gave to thought in general. Whether his teaching was right or wrong, or a little of both, it at least caused his opponents to look into the foundations of their own creed.

Hobbes steadily denied that the name "atheist" properly applied to him. He calls himself not only a theist, but a Christian, and even a faithful member of the Church of England. Some of his critics accept his assurances so far as to hold that he only meant to reject scholastic dogmas or "incrustations," and did not get beyond what is vaguely called Socinianism, or, perhaps, "unsectarian Christianity." In such discussions two distinct questions are apt to be confounded. The question, that is, what a man really believed, is identified with the question what were the logical con-

sequences of his belief. It is undeniable that a man often rejects, and sometimes rejects with horror, doctrines which to others seem to be inevitable inferences from the first principles which he explicitly affirms. It is therefore "unfair," we are told, to attribute to a man the beliefs which, to our minds, he was logically bound to hold. It is certainly unfair so far as it is false. If a man repudiates a doctrine, the repudiation should be noted, even though we may think that he is under a delusion, which amounts to a concealment of his own opinions from himself under a jugglery of words. Sometimes, indeed, we are only "unfair" in the sense that we are paying him too high a compliment by supposing that he saw the full bearing of his arguments. It is no doubt unfair again to impute opinions which a man disavows, when they are opinions which will incur odium, or perhaps involve a probability of being burnt. If the bishops, of whom Hobbes was afraid, had refused to take notice of his repudiation of atheism, they would certainly have been unjust. We have not now, however, to consider whether Hobbes deserved either burning or damnation. The devoutest of bishops would not have the least wish to burn him at the present day, and we generally admit that opinions, honestly entertained for their supposed reasonableness, do not justify moral reprobation. Our duty to Hobbes personally is simply the duty of ascertaining what, as a fact, he did think, or thought that he thought. It is of some importance to know what he thought if we wish to estimate his character for honesty and courage. But for us the more important question is what were the true logical bearings of his position, whether he perceived them or not. Those

were what really affected the thought of his time. When you have once started an argument, you cannot tell what effect it will have upon others. You are firing a charge of dynamite, and the explosion will act irrespectively of the man who set it going. The first and most important question is what "Hobbism" means, whether Hobbes meant it or not. When we know that, we can draw such inferences as seem reasonable as to his personal character.

In his *Objections* to Descartes, Hobbes indicates very plainly his position in regard to theology. He criticises Descartes's famous argument that the "idea" of God as a perfect being necessarily implies also God's existence. Hobbes replies summarily that we have no "idea" of God. An idea according to him is, as we have seen, nothing but "decaying sense." It is a fading picture of some object previously perceived by the hands, eyes, or ears. Now nobody, of course, could ever have supposed that "God" could be perceived in that way. Descartes answers that by "idea" he means something entirely different from Hobbes's "idea." What he meant need not be inquired, and Hobbes did not take the trouble to inquire. He takes it for granted that all knowledge of facts comes to us through the senses, and that the *a priori* method without appeal to experiences must be sterile. That is to him too obvious to need proof. If so, it would seem that demonstrations of the existence of God are impossible. "Knowable" means visible or tangible, and God is admittedly neither. Hobbes, however, does not admit this conclusion. After discussing man's knowledge and passions as related to "natural things," he assumes that we also give names to (that

is, reason about) "things supernatural," that is God and spirits. Such names ought to correspond to some reality, and their meaning will explain in what sense we use the phrases ascribing certain attributes to the beings named. The belief in things supernatural is produced by "curiosity," that is, as he explains, "love of the knowledge of causes." This leads a man to ask the cause of an effect; "and, again, the cause of that cause; till of necessity he must come to this thought at last that there is some cause, whereof there is no former cause, but is eternal; which is it men call God; so that it is impossible to make any profound inquiry into natural causes, without being inclined thereby to believe there is one God eternal." God is the first "power of all powers, and first cause of all causes." The name implies "eternity, incomprehensibility, and omnipotency." Incomprehensibility is explained by an analogy. A man born blind, when he warms himself by the fire, may convince himself that there is something there which is called fire by his companions, and which is the cause of the heat which he feels. But he cannot have any such "idea" of it as those have that see it. "So also by the visible things in this world, and their admirable order, a man may conceive there is a cause of them, which men call God, and yet not have an idea or image of him in his mind." The attributes of this Being must also be inconceivable. We speak of God as "seeing, hearing, speaking, knowing, loving, and the like," names which have a meaning as applied to men, but mean "nothing in the nature of God." It is "well reasoned, shall not the God that made the eye see, and the ear hear?" But it is also well reasoned "if we say, shall God which

made the eye, not see without the eye; or that made the ear, not hear without the ear; or that made the brain, not know without the brain; or that made the heart, not love without the heart." The attributes of God signify "our incapacity" or "our reverence": our "incapacity when we say *incomprehensible* and *infinite*; our reverence when we give him those names which amongst us are the names of those things we most magnify and commend, as omnipotent, omniscient, just, merciful, etc."

This may remind us of many controversies in which some orthodox divines have agreed with Hobbes. It recalls, for example, the agnosticism which Mr. Herbert Spencer professes himself to have expanded from Sir William Hamilton; while Mansel used the same doctrine in defence of orthodox creeds. So far Hobbes might have agreed with Mansel rather than with Mr. Spencer, and might have believed his creed to be susceptible of an interpretation reconcilable with orthodoxy. His position, however, depends upon his theory of causation. Although he speaks of the "admirable order" of the world, he emphatically rejects the doctrine of final causes. We are not to infer from the eye or the ear any likeness between the Creator and his creature; but only some inscrutable cause. And if we take into account what Hobbes meant by cause we come to a difficulty. The whole "world-process," according to him, is simply a series of changes in motion: when we inquire into the cause of any event we are really asking what was the previous state of things from which the succeeding was developed by a continuous series of change according to purely mechanical laws. The "cause" of the

present arrangement of the stars is simply their preceding arrangement. The argument, therefore, for a first cause means, on his interpretation, that we cannot continue this inquiry indefinitely. Instead of saying "this state implies a preceding state," "we must say "this state implies that it was put together supernaturally."

Now in the *De Corpore* he criticises this argument himself. A man will be "wearied," he says, in tracing back the series of cause and effect, and "give over" inquiry. "But whether we suppose the world to be finite or infinite, no absurdity will follow." "As it is true that nothing is moved by itself, so it is true also that nothing is moved but by that which was already moved." That implies an indefinite regress. "I cannot therefore commend," he says, "those that boast they have demonstrated by reasons drawn from natural things that the world had a beginning. They are contemned by idiots because they understand them not; and by the learned, because they understand them; by both deservedly." "They are entangled," he says "in the words *infinite* and *eternal*, of which we have in our mind no idea but that of our own insufficiency to comprehend them," and thus they are forced "either to speak something absurd, or, which they love worse, to hold their peace." Infinite, in short, means simply indefinitely great. Hobbes, therefore, will be content "with that doctrine concerning the beginning and magnitude of the world which I have been persuaded to by the Holy Scriptures, and fame of the miracles which confirm them; and by the custom of my country and reverence due to the laws."

These may be excellent, but are scarcely philo-

sophical, reasons. Bramhall, when he accused Hobbes of atheism, refers to this passage. Hobbes, he says, denies that there is any "argument to prove a Deity," except the creation of the world, and that the question whether the world had a beginning must be settled "not by argument, but by the magistrate's authority." Hobbes replies that it may be settled "by the Scriptures." "As far as arguments from natural reason," he adds, "neither you nor any other have hitherto brought any, except the creation, that has not made it more doubtful to many men than it was before." He then repeats the passage just quoted from the *De Corpore*, and adds:—"This, doctor, is not ill said, and yet it is all you ground your slander on, which you make to sneak vilely under a crooked paraphrase." "These opinions [about the beginning of the world, apparently] are to be judged by those to whom God has committed the ordering of religion; that is, to the supreme governors of the Church; that is, in England, to the king." Charles II. apparently was to decide whether the world had a beginning.

Putting aside for the moment this quaint transition from reason to the British Constitution, it is to be noticed that Hobbes had expressed himself unequivocally in the *De Cive* and the *Leviathan*. By God, he says, is understood the cause of the world. "To say the world is God, is to say there is no cause of it, that is, no God. . . . To say the world was not created but eternal, seeing that which is eternal has no cause, is to deny there is a God." It is plain then that if we may put these statements together, Hobbes declares that the only proof of God's existence is the creation of the world, and that we cannot possibly know

whether the world was or was not created. In any case, as we have seen, Hobbes always asserts most emphatically that we really know nothing of God's attributes, except His existence. Other attributes are negative or metaphorical or signs of "honour." We know nothing of God's "natural kingdom" except "from the principles of natural science, which are so far from teaching us anything of God's nature, as they cannot teach us our own nature nor the nature of the smallest creature living. And therefore when men out of the principles of natural reason dispute of the attributes of God, they but dishonour him; for in the attributes which we give to God we are not to consider the signification of philosophical truth, but the signification of pious intention to do him the greatest honour we are able." Existence indeed implies something more. Hobbes, as we have seen, denies that spirits are "incorporeal"; to say that a spirit is an "incorporeal substance" is to say that there is no spirit at all. Bramhall says that the same would apply to God. Hobbes replies that the true question is "whether God be a phantasm (*id est* an idol of the fancy, which St. Paul saith is nothing) or a corporeal spirit, that is to say, something that has magnitude." He therefore holds that God is a "most pure, simple, invisible, spirit corporeal." He illustrates this by a strange analogy. He has seen "two waters, one of the river, the other a mineral water, so like that no man could discern the one from the other," and yet when mixed, the whole was indistinguishable in appearance from milk. "If then such gross bodies have so great activity, what shall we think of spirits, whose kinds be as many as there be kinds of liquor, and activity

greater?" (How does he know that?) "Can it then be doubted that God, who is an infinitely fine spirit and withal intelligent, can make and change all kinds of bodies as he pleaseth?" God, then, like other spirits, is corporeal, though he may be called "incorporeal" to imply that he is "something between *infinitely subtile* and *nothing*: less subtile than infinitely subtile, and yet more subtile than a thought." It would be superfluous to examine this singular hypothesis to which Hobbes is driven by his desire to reconcile his materialism with his theology. It is enough to remark that his system would clearly be more consistent and intelligible if he simply omitted the theology altogether.

Meanwhile Hobbes has another doctrine about theology which is of more interest and more in accordance with his general theories. Religion, he says, is peculiar to man, and its "seed" is therefore in some quality peculiar to him. Such a quality is his curiosity as to causes; and though men vary, all men are "curious in the search of the causes of their own good and evil fortune." When he cannot discover true causes, a man supposes such as are suggested by his fancy. Meanwhile his desire for security puts him in a state of "perpetual solicitude." He resembles Prometheus on the Caucasus, "a place of large prospect," though far from comfortable. He hath "his heart all the day long gnawed on by fear of death, poverty, or other calamity; and has no repose nor pause of his anxiety but in sleep." The fear creates its object, as it does, according to his previous remark, in the case of dreams. Men ignorant of causes have to invent "some power or agent invisible." It is thus true that the

gods of the Gentiles "were at first created by human fear." Men could not, again, make any other guess as to the substance of these agents than that it was "the same with that of the soul of man," and that the soul of man was of the same substance with that which appears in a dream to sleepers or in a looking-glass to men awake. These they took for "real external substances," and called them ghosts, that is "thin aerial bodies"—for nobody could think them really "incorporeal." This ignorance, again, led them to guess at omens and prognostics when they observed accidental coincidences which they took to imply real connections. Naturally they guessed these agents to resemble themselves, and pacified them by gifts and prayers. Hobbes has already noted that from the difficulty of distinguishing "dreams and other strong fancies from vision and sense" arose the old worship of satyrs, fauns, nymphs, and the like, and nowadays the opinion that rude people have of fairies, ghosts, and goblins, and the power of witches. (Witches, he has to interject, are rightly punished, because they believe in their own power of doing mischief, not that "witchcraft is any real power.") Belief in fancies and ghosts is inculcated to keep in credit the use of exorcism, of crosses, of holy water, and other such inventions of "ghostly men." "In these four things, opinion of ghosts, ignorance of second causes, devotion towards what men fear, and taking of things casual for prognostics, consisteth the natural seed of *religion*." The seeds have been cultivated by "two sorts of men": by founders of commonwealths and the lawgivers of the Gentiles on the one hand, who "used their own invention," and

on the other by "Abraham, Moses, and our blessed Saviour," who acted by "God's commandment and direction." Both desired to make men more apt to obedience, laws, peace, charity, and civil society; though in one case religion was part of "human politics," and in the other of "divine politics." He has then no difficulty in showing what grotesque results followed from the Gentile religions; and when Bramhall founds upon this passage a charge of atheism, he can reply that his account of the origin of religion tells against the Gentile superstitions alone. The savage people feared "invisible powers," that is, something which they took to be gods; so that the fear of a god, though not the true one, was to them the beginning of religion, as the fear of the true God was the beginning of wisdom to the Jews and Christians.

The political aspect of his theory which makes legislators the founders of religion will be noticed presently. In the *Leviathan* he gives some remarkable definitions: "Fear of power invisible feigned by the mind or imagined from tales publicly allowed —*Religion*; not allowed—*Superstition*; and when the power imagined is truly such as we imagine—*True Religion*." "True religion," it may be inferred, when not publicly allowed, is superstition. Whether Hobbes wishes to draw that inference we need not decide, nor need we ask how far he was quite convinced that the history of the Jewish belief presents so complete a contrast to the history of the religions founded by other legislators.

It is enough to say that Hobbes is here on the way to much later speculation. A hundred years afterwards

Hume in his *Natural History of Religion* treated the same topic with his usual acuteness, and suggested theories afterwards taken up by Comte. Later students of the science of religion have enormously extended the range of the inquiry and accumulated vast masses of evidence for various theories. In Hobbes's time, or, indeed, in Hume's or even Comte's, it was not possible to get beyond general conjectures. Hobbes knew next to nothing of the savage peoples to whom he refers, and can only guess as to their probable mode of thought. He is thinking chiefly of the classical mythologies, where he can find plenty of examples of grotesque and vicious deities. All that can be said is, that he saw clearly the importance of the problems as to the growth of religions, though, in the absence of the requisite knowledge, he could only make a few very acute and pithy suggestions.

If we now come to the question what was Hobbes's real position in regard to theology, I think that there can be only one answer. It is quite clear that his, like other materialistic systems, is incompatible with anything that can be called theism. His argument comes merely to this, that if the world was created—a point which, we see, he admits to be doubtful—the Creator must have been a Being of stupendous power, but one of whom we are unable to say anything else. The doctrine that he is "corporeal" or an infinitely "subtile" matter occupying space is merely a quaint attempt to evade the more natural inference that he is simply outside of all knowable relations. A religion of this kind is not likely to give much trouble to anybody; and Hobbes's opponents were right in regarding him as virtually opposed to all possible

theology. What Hobbes himself thought is not quite so obvious. There is a presumption, indeed, that so bold a thinker must have seen the plain inferences from his principles. If he did not see them for himself, they were pointed out by antagonists; and though Hobbes, like most people, was apt to think that antagonism means misrepresentation, he could scarcely fail to see that they had in his case some ground for their comments. His answers, indeed, seem less to meet the arguments than to be ingenious devices for shifting the question. Hobbes certainly made his reserves. When Spinoza's *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* appeared in 1670 he said to Aubrey that Spinoza "has cut through me a bar's length, for I durst not write so boldly." It would indeed be difficult to blame a timid old gentleman for not courting martyrdom. The blame for reservation belongs to the persecutor more than to the persecuted. It is, I think, far more remarkable that Hobbes spoke so frankly than that he did not reveal his whole mind. What he actually did was to use language which, though it caused general antipathy, and had implications quite clear to the qualified reader, would have been difficult to cite as proofs of punishable opinions in a legal indictment. Every one is agreed to admire the admirable candour and love of truth of Spinoza. Yet I think that the meaning attached by Spinoza to the word "God" is quite as unlike the ordinary meaning of theologians as the meaning attached to it by Hobbes. Both have defined their meaning quite frankly. If I say that an object is white and add openly that by white I mean what most people call black, I cannot be accused of deception, though I may be taking advantage of the

verbal ambiguity which more or less binds the hands of my enemies. It might be pleasanter to drop all disguise, but I am simply playing the game on the terms which they themselves have chosen. I do not, indeed, feel certain that Hobbes admitted even to himself the true nature of his position. He may have retained some of the horror for "atheism" in which he had been educated and thrown dust in his own eyes as well as in other people's. My chief reason for doubting is that, as we shall presently see, he relies, in his political writings, upon certain doctrines as to "the laws of God," which are apparently essential to his argument, and which could hardly be used by one to whom the words meant nothing. It is true that they do not in any case mean very much; still it is possible that Hobbes retained certain prepossessions which, as it seems to me, were really incompatible with his first principles.

3. *Determinism*

I must now speak of Hobbes's position in regard to the free-will controversy.

To mention the topic is enough to give the alarm to all readers who are not in love with metaphysical hair-splitting for its own sake. It has become the type of fruitless controversy. Milton, in a familiar passage, intimated that the argument was only suitable to beings who had an indefinite amount of time on their hands and to whom any distraction would be agreeable. At times, indeed, the popular mind is startled by some supposed consequence of "determinism." It is supposed to imply the existence of a

Fate which forces people, whether they like it or not, to commit so many murders in proportion to their population, or forces a sober person to take to drink because his grandfather was a drunkard. I am not about to argue the question, nor to follow in detail the brisk controversy between Hobbes and Bramhall. It will be enough to indicate briefly the position taken by Hobbes in regard to the contemporary phase of a perennial discussion. Milton's view was no doubt natural in the days of the Synod of Dort and the Westminster Assembly. The controversies between Catholics and Protestants necessarily involved conflicts over the free-will problem. In the Catholic doctrine the church is the appointed guardian of morality, conceived as a system of divine laws. The sacraments supply the means by which men may obtain grace to obey the law and receive forgiveness for transgressions. The whole system supposes that men have "free-will" and acquire "merit." They can either obey or disobey the law, and therefore they can deserve reward or punishment. The Protestant revolt against the authority of the Church led to the assertion of principles which when logically developed struck at the root of the whole system. A man can acquire no "merit," that is, no claim upon his Creator, for his obedience to the law. God, it must be supposed, approves a man for what he is, not for what he has done. One man may forgive another for an injury when compensation has been made. But the divine forgiveness can only mean that the will to do wrong is destroyed. Salvation must be gained, not by giving satisfaction for wrongs, but by the conformity of the man's nature to the divine order. The sinner must

change his heart, not balance his accounts with his creditor. To the Protestant, therefore, the vital point became regeneration or conversion, and the sacraments have at most a secondary importance. But it then becomes difficult to admit "free-will." Man clearly cannot make himself. He cannot even contribute to the work of divine grace; for to allow him a share in the process is to admit some claim to "merit." Conversion, therefore, must be supernatural and the man merely passive.

While the Catholic divines were elaborating systems of casuistry and turning morality into a code of laws analogous to human legislation, the Protestants were endeavouring to form theories as to the action of divine grace upon the human heart. They discussed the "Five Articles" at the Synod of Dort, laid down dogmas as to predestination, election, the atonement, the corruption of human nature and its various consequences. The metaphysical controversy was continued with attempts to accept compromises with the old systems, and to find a sanction for every dogma in the Bible, regarded as a supernatural act of parliament, of which every word was divinely inspired. The discussion, instead of tending to unity, seemed to be only producing a ramification into diverging sects and conflicting dogmatisms. It might be shrewdly suspected that the reasoners were getting out of their depth, and it was clear that they were reaching some shocking results. When free-will has disappeared, it seems hard that a sinner should be tortured endlessly for doing what he was predestined to do. But how is the difficulty to be met? A century later Jonathan Edwards was led by his stern Calvinism to write one

of the acutest of all treatises upon free-will, and to expound the doctrine of "determinism," or, as it was called, "philosophical necessity." For the present, the discussion was mixed up with heterogeneous elements, derived from the traditional dogmas. Hobbes, though he cared little for theological dogmas, was interested in the metaphysical part of the controversy. He is very little given to quote authorities; but in his discussion with Bramhall, he claims to be supported on one essential point by Luther, Calvin, the Synod of Dort, and other Protestant authorities. "All the famous doctors of the Reformed Churches," he says, "and with them St. Augustine, are of the same opinion." The problem was in the air.

In England, Calvinism was going out of fashion. The rationalist, disgusted by endless and fruitless controversy, hoped that unity might be reached by confining the creed to those points (if any) upon which all Christians, or perhaps all religions, were agreed. The metaphysical subtleties might be left to amuse professors in their studies. The Anglican divines had accepted Calvinism during the heat of their controversy with Rome. They were now opposing Calvinism on one side as much as Rome on the other. "What do the Arminians hold? All the best preferments in England," was the famous quibble which marked the changed attitude. The Church of England, claiming to be the legitimate continuation of the mediæval church, inherited the old theories as to the claims and functions of the priesthood, which necessarily involved a doctrine of free-will and a rejection of the Calvinism which had for a time found acceptance. Bramhall was a man of great vigour, who has been recently called by

a competent critic, "one of the ablest champions" of the Church of England. He represented one special antipathy of his opponent. Hobbes was never tired of denouncing the "jargon" of the schoolmen, and regarded their doctrines as the great obstacle in the way of all intellectual progress. At the universities, however, the schoolmen were still held in honour and supplied the weapons for theological controversy. Bramhall had sufficient training in the art to wield their writings with familiarity and no little skill of fence. When Hobbes speaks irreverently of these authorities, Bramhall seems to be as much astonished as disgusted. It seems as if he were quite unaware that a revolt against the whole system had long been in progress. He had obviously taken no interest in the scientific movement represented by Bacon or Hobbes. "It troubles him to see a scholar who hath been long admitted into the innermost closet of nature and seen the hidden secrets of more subtle learning, so far forget himself as to style school learning no better than a plain jargon, that is, a senseless gibberish or a fustian language like the chattering noise of sabots." Hobbes, he thinks, objects to scholastic distinctions, because a sore eye is offended by the sight of the sun. Are all terms of art to be given up? Is the moral philosopher to "quit his means and extremes . . ., his liberty of contradiction and contrariety?" Must the "natural philosopher give over his intentional species . . . his receptive and eductive power of the matter, his qualities *infusæ* or *influxæ*, *symbolæ* or *dissymbolæ*, his temperament *ad pondus* and *ad justitiam*, . . . his sympathies and antipathies, his *antiperistasis*, etc.? Are the astrologer and the geographer to leave

their *apogæum* and *perigæum*, their arctic and antarctic poles, their equator, zodiac, zenith, meridian, horizon, zones, etc.?" Hobbes will find that such things are necessary in every art. Let him go on shipboard and the mariners will not leave their *starboard* and *larboard* because he accounts it gibberish. Hobbes is quite ready to part with some of these words. Terms, he thinks, should be thrown away when they cannot be understood, and, when they can, should be used rightly. The astrologer (unless the bishop means astronomer[1]) had better throw away his whole trade; but to the astronomer "equator," "zodiac," and so forth, are as useful as saw or hatchet to a carpenter. The "metaphysician" should quit both his terms and his profession, and the divine use only such words as the hearer can understand.

Bramhall therefore takes the airs of a philosophical expert dealing with a coarse ignoramus. He may be compared to a profound Hegelian lecturing a disciple of J. S. Mill or Mr. Herbert Spencer. The scholastic terminology appears obscure to Hobbes only because the subject-matter is difficult and the listener stupid. We do not now despise each other so heartily or express our contempt so frankly. Bramhall claims the victory with a confidence which is shared by his last editor, who only regrets that he should not have met with an antagonist "more worthy of him," and should have wasted time in replying to "peevish and feeble crotchets." I fancy that Bramhall is better remembered as Hobbes's opponent than Hobbes as Bramhall's;

[1] Bramhall had some belief in astrology. "All judicious astronomers hold that the stars 'incline' though they do not 'necessitate' the will."

but they represent modes of thought so different, that it is easy to understand how each should be triumphant in the eyes of his own side.

Hobbes's main purpose is obvious. He aspires to apply scientific methods to what we now call psychological and sociological problems. This leads him, like many of his successors, to deny altogether the possibility of "free-will." Free-will, as he understands it, means the presence of an essentially arbitrary factor in human conduct. If we knew the whole character of a man and all the motives that act upon him, we should still, if free-will be a reality, be unable to predict his action. Everything else being the same, his choice is indeterminate. No one, of course, supposes his choice to be absolutely arbitrary; but, so far as the arbitrary element remains, scientific certainty is impossible. Science, according to Hobbes, means the deduction of effects from causes. Free-will supposes the so-called chain to be broken. Given the cause, the effect may be this or that. If this be really implied in the conception of free-will, it is obvious that if it does not destroy the possibility, it limits the field of moral science. Hobbes's whole doctrine is radically opposed to this theory. Man, he has told us, is moved by "appetites" and "aversions." On one side these appetites are literally "motions" in the physical organism: reactions set up by contact with outside things, following as necessarily as the motion of the hands of the clock follows from the descent of the weight. On the other side they appear to us as phantasms—as hopes of good and fears of evil; good being the same as the pleasurable, and evil as the painful. When we have alternating and conflicting hopes

and fears, we call the process "deliberation." The resultant which determines the action is the last appetite, or, as we call it, the will. The "passions," appetites, aversions, hopes, and fears do not, he says, proceed from, they *are* the will. In his discussion with Bramhall, Hobbes does not lay stress upon the physical aspect. We know, he says, by reflecting on ourselves, that "deliberation or choice" means simply considering the good and evil consequences of our actions. Reflection will also convince us that nothing can begin without a cause. Everything is caused: our actions are caused by our expectations of good and evil, or (which is identical) of pleasure and pain. Whether we take it physiologically or psychologically, all conduct is determined, or, as he calls it, "necessary." Freedom has still a precise meaning. It means the "absence of all impediments to action that are not contained in the nature of the agent." Thus defined, freedom is compatible with "necessitation." I am free when my action is necessitated by my own desires, not by external conditions. I am not free to walk out when the door is locked; I am free when it is open. But I am "necessitated to use my freedom by the desire which causes me to walk out or not to walk out"; only in this case the necessity is in my own nature, not in the surroundings. Freedom, therefore, as he constantly insists, means freedom to *do* what I will; but freedom to *will* what I will is nonsense. A man, in his illustration, may be free to eat if there is no obstacle between him and his food. But he is not free to have or not to have an appetite for his food. That is settled by his organism. His will is the appetite. The "freedom" of the will, understood as

denying causation, is an illusion. When we do not know the causes of volition, we assume that it is uncaused. Chance usually means our ignorance. Everything, he infers, is necessary. He ought rather, I think, to have argued that "necessary," like "probable," "possible," and so forth, really refers to our knowledge, and means no more than "certain." His use of the word seems to imply that besides the man and his circumstances, there is an external fate which coerces him.

So far, Hobbes is saying what has been said by later "determinists." Bramhall calls him the "ringleader of a new sect, or rather the first nominal Christian who has raised from its grave the 'sleeping ghost' of the Stoics' fate." Hobbes, if Bramhall is correct, may be credited with giving the purely scientific version of the doctrine more or less implied in the Calvinist theology. To Bramhall it naturally appears monstrous and unintelligible. He holds it to be as clear that "there are free actions which proceed merely from election without any outward necessitation" as that there is a sun in the heavens. That is the usual appeal to our consciousness of free-will. Hobbes, however, might accept the phrase, if amended, by the admission that there is "inward necessitation." They agree that voluntary action implies "deliberation." Hobbes considers that deliberation is as much determined or necessitated as any other natural process. Bramhall replies by one of the distinctions which to Hobbes were meaningless "jargon." The "motives" and "passions," he says, only move the will morally; they do not determine it naturally. Moral determination, according to Hobbes, is still determination. The

will, says Bramhall, hath a free dominion over itself; she is the mistress of human actions; the understanding is her trusty counsellor which she can consult or not as she pleases. Bramhall talks, says Hobbes, as if the will and the other faculties "were men or spirits in men's bellies." It is the man and not the will who decides. In this case Hobbes hits the mark. Bramhall seems to accept a kind of psychological mythology in which abstractions like "the will" are personified, and logical distinctions made to imply different faculties in the concrete individual. Freedom no doubt is a rational concept, for it does not imply contradiction. But it does not follow that because a thing can be rightly described by an indeterminate phrase, a concrete indeterminate thing can exist. I will not, however, go into the argument. Bramhall, I take it, cannot confute the theory that conduct is caused, because there are no arguments by which it can be confuted. It is consistent in itself. Whether it can be proved or whether it is opposed to our immediate consciousness are other questions which I leave to those who are amused by them. Neither need I speak of other arguments, which fill a large space in the dispute, such as the argument from texts: whether the famous passage in the Epistle to the Romans denies free-will; or the question to the paralytic person, "wilt thou be clean," implies that he had free-will. Nor will I speak of the puzzles about reconciling the divine prescience to "indeterminism"; or the difference between admitting that the Creator permitted sin, and admitting that he caused it. The arguments are familiar, and to Hobbes, Bramhall seems to be constantly evading them by verbal dis-

tinctions. It is a fight between a man of science looking at the facts, and a skilful dialectician dodging them under shelter of irrelevant concepts.

The horror felt for determinism is due to what Hobbes calls "certain inconveniences" supposed to be its consequences. For that reason Hobbes wished, he says, to keep discussion private. A sinner might excuse himself—however illogically—by saying that his sin was predetermined. He did not want a murderer to say, "Mr. Hobbes tells me that I couldn't help it."

Now a rational theory of determinism may be, as I think that it is, free from that objection. But Hobbes's version leads to consequences which are startling to the moralist and significant of his general attitude. Bramhall, as his opponents hold, confuses determinism with fatalism. He therefore argues that necessity makes laws unjust, and all advice, praise, blame, books, doctors, and tutors absurd. If the future is determined by "unalterable necessity, whether we be idle or industrious, why do we labour"? The answer is of course obvious. The end is not determined irrespectively of the means. To say, "If I shall live till to-morrow, I shall live though I run myself through with a sword to-day," is absurd; for if I am fated to live till to-morrow, I am also fated not to run myself through to-day. It is not absurd to make a law against crime, for the law alters the conditions, by affecting the will. A man, it may be, cannot refrain from murder when there is no law, but can when he knows he is to be hanged for it. Murderers, says Hobbes, are killed because they are noxious, not because they are "not necessitated." Hobbes, that is,

accepts the purely deterrent theory of criminal law. You are not hanged for stealing sheep, as the judge said, but hanged in order that sheep may not be stolen. Bramhall, he says, "takes punishment for a kind of revenge." Hobbes, on the other hand, denies that any good man will afflict another, except to reform the will of the criminal or other men. "Nor can I understand, having only human ideas, that that punishment which neither intendeth the correction of the offender nor the correction of others can proceed from God?" Hobbes, I take it, would in this be approved by all rational law reformers. Punishment is justifiable so far only as it tends to diminish crime, and not because it gratifies a desire for vengeance which prompts the infliction of superfluous suffering. Most people, however, feel that his statement is insufficient. We have a right to destroy "all that is noxious," says Hobbes, "both beasts and men." We kill the murderer as we kill the wolf; and we kill the wolf "justly when we do it in order to our own preservation." The theory seems to omit an essential element in the case. When we say that punishment should be "just," do we not imply that there is some essential difference between killing a wolf and hanging a murderer? But Hobbes is forced by his logic to take up one very questionable position. Bramhall asks him what, upon his theory, is the meaning of praise and blame? If all actions be necessary why are they praiseworthy or blameworthy? We blame people, says Hobbes, "because they please us not." Blaming means the saying that a thing is imperfect. A man is a fool or a knave even if he cannot help it When it was said that Cato was good by nature, *et quia aliter esse non potuit*, he surely

received very high praise. If necessity does not make praise meaningless, why, asks Bramhall, do we not praise fire for burning? Men are the tennis-balls of destiny, and are good and bad only as a ball is good or bad. Hobbes replies that we do blame fire or poison as much as we do men. We do not seek to be revenged on them, "because we cannot make them ask forgiveness, as we would make men to do when they hurt us." The blame is the same in both, "but the malice of man is only against man."

When Hobbes was pressed by a *reductio ad absurdum* he generally had the courage to swallow the absurdity. In this case his logic had put him in an awkward place. Accepting his materialism and his thorough-going egoism, two men in opposition appear to us simply as two tennis-balls coming into collision. The man, no doubt, might be more consistently mischievous than the ball, as he is supposed to be malicious. The ball might sometimes give an impulse in the right direction, while the wicked man will always aim at doing injury. Still so long as a man considers his own feelings exclusively, the difference between blaming a poison and blaming the poisoner seems to be one of degree rather than of kind. The determinist may hold that Hobbes's error lay, not in assuming that human motives act regularly, but in failing to take into account the man behind the thing, and those emotions of love and hatred which imply sympathy and a direct interest in the happiness or sorrow of others. The difficulty comes out when he is arguing the question of divine justice. Of God, according to Hobbes, we really know nothing, except that He is omnipotent. It is, then, only from that attribute that we can derive His

justice. Beasts are subject to death and torment; yet "they cannot sin." It was God's will it should be so. "Power irresistible justifieth all actions, really and properly, in whomsoever it be found." It is, he adds, to be found in God only. "God cannot sin because his doing a thing makes it just and consequently no sin; and because whatsoever can sin is subject to another's law, which God is not; and therefore it is blasphemy to say God can sin." Hobbes, it would seem, would have been more consistent if he had left out "justice" altogether. His God—the creator of the physical universe—is the author of what the man of science calls "the laws of nature." But they are simply the mechanical laws. It is not "just" that weights should balance each other when they are proportioned in a certain way to the length of the arms of a lever; it is simply a fact. Morality has nothing to do one way or the other with the motions of the planets or the "laws of gravitation." The physical system of the universe is morally neutral. Morality can only begin with the conscious and sentient being. The assumption, however, that a "law of nature" means the same in both cases becomes very important in Hobbes's theory of the State, where we shall meet it again.

Meanwhile it may be remarked for the old gentleman's credit that he is shocked by one inference drawn by others. Bramhall has argued from "eternal torments": their existence proves liberty. "To take away liberty hazards heaven but undoubtedly it leaves no hell." Some people might consider that consequence to be a partial compensation. Bramhall, however, has no doubt about hell; and the Calvinists, though they took away liberty, were quite convinced that the

eternal torment of sinners was just. Hobbes was so far with them that he was bound to admit the justice of any actually existing arrangement, but he refuses to admit the existence of hell. Though God may "afflict a man, and not for sin, without injustice, shall we think him so cruel as to afflict a man, and not for sin, with extreme and endless torment? Is it not cruelty? No more than to do the same for sin, when he that so doeth might without trouble have kept him from sinning." He asks, however, where the Scriptures say that "a second death is an endless life? Or do the doctors say it? Then perhaps they do but say so and for reasons best known to themselves." "It seemeth hard to say," he observes elsewhere, "that God, who is the father of mercies, that doth in heaven and earth all that he will, that hath the hearts of all men in his disposing, that worketh in men both to do and to will . . . should punish men's transgressions without any end of time and with all the extremity of torture that men can imagine and more." Hobbes managed to reconcile his theory to the orthodox view in a rather singular fashion. But modern divines will not quarrel with him for declining to believe in the old doctrine of damnation.

One other remark must be added. Hobbes is not content with resolving the divine justice into power. Human justice is equally the creature of power. Natural goodness differs, he says, from moral. A horse has natural goodness if he is strong and gentle and so forth; and if there were no laws, there would be as much "moral good" in a horse as in a man. It is the law which makes the difference. Law-makers may err; but from obedience to the law, whether

made in error or not, proceeds "moral praise." Since our notions of good and bad are relative and mean simply what pleases or displeases us, we can only get a common rule by subjection to the law. "All the real good, which we call honest and morally virtuous, is that which is not repugnant to the law, civil or natural; for the law is all the right reason we have, and . . . is the infallible rule of moral goodness." Our fallibility compels us to "set up a sovereign governor" and agree that his law shall be to us in the place of right reason. He illustrates this principle from card-playing. When men have turned up trumps, "their morality consisteth in not renouncing," that is, in observing the rules of the game; and so "in civil conversation our morality is all contained in not disobeying of the laws."

This doctrine—not at first sight very satisfactory—will be more intelligible when we have considered the *Leviathan*.

CHAPTER IV

THE STATE[1]

1. *Contemporary Controversies*

We come now to the third part of Hobbes's philosophy. He is to base a science of politics upon the doctrines already expounded. We become aware that there is a certain breach of continuity. To understand his line of thought, it is necessary to take note both of the problems in which he was specially interested, and the form into which the arguments had been moulded by previous thinkers. He applies to the questions of the day certain conceptions already current in political theory, though he uses them in such a way as materially to alter their significance.

Hobbes's theory in the first place involves the acceptance of a so-called "Law of Nature." "Nature," as we know, is a word contrived in order to introduce as many equivocations as possible into all the theories, political, legal, artistic, or literary, into which it enters.

[1] Hobbes's political theory is given in three books: the *De Corpore Politico*, which was the second part of his first treatise, and is reprinted in the fourth volume of the English works; the *De Cive*, which is in the Latin works, vol. iii., and an English translation of which, by Hobbes himself, forms the second volume of the English works; and the *Leviathan*, which forms the third volume of the English works.

The "Law of Nature," as writers upon jurisprudence tell us, was invented by Roman lawyers with the help of Stoic philosophers. The lawyers, having to deal with the legal systems of the numerous races which came into contact with Rome, were led to recognise a certain body of laws common to all. Such law came to be considered as laid down by Nature. It was a product of the human nature common to Greeks and Romans, and not affected by the special modifications by which Romans are distinguished from Greeks. It belonged to the genus man, not to the species nation. The philosopher, meanwhile, took the Law of Nature to be law imposed by the divine author of nature, discoverable by right reason, and therefore common to all reasoning beings. The law in either case is "natural" because universally valid. But this may cover two diverging conceptions. To the man of science "nature" means everything actually existing. One quality cannot be more "natural" than another, though it may be more widely diffused. A scientific investigator of jurisprudence would inquire what systems of law prevail in different countries, and would seek to discover the causes of uniformity or difference. The inquirer is so far simply concerned with the question of fact, and to him the exceptional is just as much a natural product as the normal legislation. The scientific point of view is that from which one might expect Hobbes to treat the question. He accepts, however, the Law of Nature in another sense. It meant an ideal, not an actual law, and tells us what ought to be, not what is. There may of course be a presumption that a law (if there is such law) which is universally accepted is also dictated by

reason; or a state may be so happily constituted that the perception that a law is reasonable may involve its acceptance in the actual system. But in any case the Law of Nature is supposed to be the type to which the actual law should be made to conform, and therefore implies a contrast and occasional conflict between the two systems.

Hobbes's view implies another distinction. Every one admits that laws may rightly vary according to circumstances within certain limits. There are laws, we may say, which it is right to obey because they are the law, and others which are the law because it is right to obey them. In England the law of the road tells carriages to keep to the left, and in France to keep to the right. We clearly ought to obey each rule in its own country. But there are other cases. In some countries the law permits or enforces rules of marriage which in other countries are held to be immoral and revolting. Is it true in this case also that each law is right in its own country, or is one set of laws to be condemned as contrary to the Law of Nature? Given the Law of Nature, that is, how are we to decide what sphere of discretion is to be left to the legislator? Can he deal with the most vital as well as the most trivial relations, or how is his proper sphere of authority to be defined? Where does "positive" law begin and natural law end? This involves the problem, How far does the power of the legislature extend?—or, What is the relation between the sovereign and the subject. That was a problem which had not been discussed in the classical philosophy. Man as a "political animal" was so identified with the State that citizenship was an essential part of him. Different

forms of government might be compared, but the individual could not be conceived as existing independently of the State. To Hobbes the State had become an "artificial" construction, and therefore its relation to the units of which it was constructed had to be settled and was vitally important.

The theory of sovereignty had become interesting when there were rival claimants to sovereignty. The Christian Church, beginning as a voluntary association outside the State, and appealing to men in their individual capacity, had become a gigantic organisation with an elaborate constitution and legal system. It had come into collision, alliance, and rivalry with the empire. According to the accepted theory, both powers had legitimate claims to allegiance. Pope and emperor were compared to the sun and moon, though it might be disputed which was the sun and which was the moon, or whether they were not rather two independent luminaries. In the great controversies which arose, the Church had an obvious advantage. It derived its authority from direct revelation. It represented on earth the supreme Being, and was entrusted by him with power to enforce the moral laws which coincide with the Law of Nature. As the empire could claim no special revelation, the advocates of its claims had to find some independent support for them in the Law of Nature. To the question, then, Whence is derived the obligation to obey the State, or rather the ruler? there was but one obvious answer. "All obligation," says Hobbes, "derives from contract." It is part of the Law of Nature that man should observe compacts. If therefore the relation between sovereign and subject depends upon a compact, there

is a sufficient obligation to obedience though the ruler has not a special commission from God. It could not, it is true, be proved that such a compact had ever been made, nor that, if made in one generation, it would be binding on the next, nor was it possible to say what were the exact terms of the supposed compact. But such cavils were trifles. They could be met by saying that there was an "implicit" contract, and that it, no doubt, prescribed reasonable terms. This theory was gradually developed in the Middle Ages, and when Hobbes was a young man it had acquired especial currency from the great book in which Grotius had adopted it, when applying the Law of Nature to regulate the ethics of peace and war.[1]

This set of conceptions gives Hobbes's starting-point, though in his hands the Law of Nature and the social compact received a peculiar development or, indeed, seemed to be turned inside out. He applied them to the great controversies in which he and his contemporaries were specially interested. The complicated struggles of the Reformation period had raised issues which were still undecided. Church and State, whatever the theory of their relations, were so closely connected as to form parts of one organism, and a separation of them, such as is contemplated by modern speculation, was unthinkable. If the two bodies had conflicting claims, they were also recipro-

[1] A very remarkable book, the *Politics* of Johannes Althusius (1557-1636), that appeared in 1603, anticipated much that Hobbes afterwards said, and played a considerable part in the evolution of the theory of "Naturrecht." Professor Gierke's most learned and interesting book upon Althusius gives a full account of his doctrine and of his relation to Hobbes among many others.

cally necessary. Their systems of legislation were not independent, but interpenetrating. Each implied the other, and the State was bound to suppress heresy, as the Church to condemn rebellion. The disruption of the old system implied both civil and foreign war. The lines of cleavage ran through both Church and State, and in each fragment the ecclesiastical and secular system had to readjust their relations. When in England Henry VIII. renounced the authority of the pope, he had to become a bit of a pope himself. In Scotland the Church, though it might suppose that it had returned to primitive purity, could not be expected for that reason to relinquish its claims to authority over the laity. In the famous "Monarchomachist" controversy, Jesuits agreed with Scottish Protestants and French Huguenots in defending tyrannicide. They had a common interest in limiting the claims of the secular power. Jacques Clément and Ravaillac gave a pointed application in France to the Jesuit doctrine; and the Scots had to make a case against Queen Mary. Meanwhile the claims of the Catholic Church were the cause or the pretext of the warfare which culminated in the Spanish Armada. The patriotic Englishman regarded the pope as the instigator or accomplice of the assailants of our national independence. Persecution of priests seemed to be necessary, even if cruel, when priests were agents of the power which supported hostile fleets and inspired murderous conspiracies. Throughout the seventeenth century the protestant Englishman suffered from "papacy" on the brain, and his fear flashed into panic for the last time when Hobbes was dying. During his youth the keenest controversy had been raging over

the claims of the papacy. James I. himself and his most learned divines, such as Andrewes and Donne, were arguing against the great Catholic divines, Suárez and Bellarmine. The controversy turned especially upon the imposition of the oath renouncing the doctrine of the right of the pope to depose kings. To that right was opposed the "divine right of kings": thereby being meant, not that kings had a "right divine to govern wrong," but that the king's right was as directly derived from Heaven as the rights of the Church.

Hobbes, as we shall see, was deeply impressed by these problems. The power of the Catholic Church to enforce its old claims was rapidly disappearing; but men are often most interested in discussing the means of escaping the dangers of the day before yesterday. While Hobbes was elaborating his system, great political issues seemed to turn upon the relation between the spiritual and secular authority. Meanwhile the purely political were inextricably mixed up with ecclesiastical questions. James's formula, "no bishop, no king," expressed the fact. The Church of England was in the closest alliance with the royal authority; "passive obedience" to the king became almost an essential doctrine, even with liberal Anglican divines; and the rebellion was the outcome of the discontent in both spheres. In England the claim of parliament to a share of power came first, but the power was to be applied on behalf of religious Puritanism. In Scotland the Church question was most prominent; but the Church, in the rule of which, as James complained, Tom, Dick, and Harry had claimed to have a voice, also represented the aspirations of the nation. The

political problem was equally important, whatever might be the motives for demanding political power. The question in England was whether the ancient parliamentary institutions were to be preserved and developed, or to be allowed to fall into decay as in other European countries where the State was being organised on different lines. In later days, writers, who held the British constitution to be an embodiment of perfect wisdom, naturally venerated the Hampdens and Eliots as representatives of the ultimately victorious, and therefore rightful cause.

As Hobbes altogether condemned their principles, we must remind ourselves how things appeared at the time. To men who desired a vigorous national government—which is surely a very reasonable desire—the claims of the parliamentary party appeared to be a hopeless obstacle. All men admitted that the king was to have the fullest authority over the national policy; he might make war or peace without consulting anybody; and if he could make it at his own expense, parliament had no ground for interference. The only thing which it could do was to refuse money if he wanted it for a policy which it disliked. It was as if the crew of a ship of war gave the command unreservedly to the captain, but, if they disliked the direction in which he was steering, showed disapproval by turning off the steam. That obviously would be a clumsy method. Parliament did not superintend or give general directions, but could throw the whole system out of gear when it pleased. We know, of course, how the struggle resulted in the supremacy of parliament, and of that party organisation which enabled it to act as a unit, and to regulate

the whole national policy with a certain continuity of purpose. In Hobbes's time not only could such a system, as historians agree, occur to no one, but if it had occurred it would have been impracticable. To be efficient it required, not merely an exposition of principles, but the development of a mutual understanding between the different classes, which was not less essential because not expressed in any legal document. The art of parliamentary government has to be learnt by practice.

Another remark is now pretty obvious. The British people managed to work out a system which had, as we all believe, very great advantages and may justify some of the old panegyrics. Men could speak more freely—if not always more wisely—in England than elsewhere, and individual energy developed with many most admirable, if with some not quite admirable consequences. But the success was won at a cost. The central authority of the State was paralysed; and many observers may admit that in securing liberty at the price of general clumsiness and inefficiency of all the central administrative functions, the cost has been considerable. It is desirable to remember this point when we come to Hobbes's special theories. To him the demands of the parliamentary party appeared to imply a hopeless disorganisation of the political machinery. His political writings, though professing to be a piece of abstract logic, are also essentially aimed at answering these questions. The vital problem involved was, as he thought, What is sovereignty and who should be sovereign? The State, on one side, was struggling with the Church—whether the Church of Rome or the Church of Scotland—and, on

the other hand, the supreme power was claimed for king alone, for parliament alone, and for some combination of the two. What will a scientific analysis enable us to say as to the general nature of the supreme power and as to the best constitution of a body politic? The country, as he says, for some years before the civil war, "was boiling over with questions concerning the rights of dominion and the obedience due from subjects": a state of things which "ripened and plucked" from him the third part of his philosophy before the other parts were ready.

2. *The Social Contract*

Hobbes's political theories are expounded in the *De Corpore Politico* (the little treatise of 1640), the *De Cive*, and the *Leviathan*. The title of the last of these works is suggested by certain words in the Book of Job: "*Non est potestas super terram quæ comparetur ei.*" They are printed at the head of the quaint allegorical title-page, where a composite giant, his body made of human beings, holds the sword in one and a crosier in the other hand, while beneath him is a wide country with a town, a fort, and a church in the foreground, and below it are various symbols of temporal and spiritual power. The great Leviathan, he tells us, is that mortal god to which we owe, under the immortal God, our peace and defence. But he is also a machine. We are to take him to pieces in imagination, as we actually take to pieces a watch to understand its construction. We have already seen the statement of Hobbes's method. It is impossible to deduce the properties of this complex mechanism by the synthetical method;

but by analysing the observed "motions of the mind" we can discover its essential principles. Justice, he says, means giving to each man his own. How does a man come to have an "own"? Because community of goods breeds contention, while reason prescribes peace. From the regulation of the "concupiscible" nature by the "rational" arises the system of moral and civil laws embodied in the great Leviathan. We have to examine this process in detail. Men have, as we have seen, "a perpetual and restless desire of power after power." In the next place, men are naturally equal. The weakest in body, at any rate, may kill the strongest, and there is a still greater equality in mind. This doctrine of natural equality he tries to establish by rather quaint arguments. "Every man," he says, "thinks himself as wise, though not as witty or learned as his neighbours. What better proof can there be of equality of distribution than that every man is contented with his share?" That is hardly convincing; but what Hobbes means to say is, that no man has such a superiority over his fellows as would make him secure in the chaotic struggle of "the state of nature." When two men want the same thing, therefore, each will have a chance. Competition, diffidence (a distrust of each other), and glory (the desire, we may say, for prestige) are the three principal causes of quarrel. "The first maketh men invade for gain; the second for safety; the third for reputation." When there is no common power to overawe, there will be a "war of every man against every man." War, he explains, is not confined to actual fighting, but exists where there is a "known disposition thereto" and "no assurance to the contrary." So long as this state

continues, "there is no place for industry, because the fruit thereof is uncertain," and (besides many other wants) "no arts, no letters, no society, and which is worst of all, continual fear and danger of violent death; and the life of man solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short." Do you object to this account of man? Look at experience. Does not a man arm himself when he is going a journey? Does he not lock the chests in his own house, although he knows that there are public officers to protect them? What opinion does that imply of his fellow subjects or of his servants? "Does he not as much accuse mankind by his actions, as I do by my words?"

But was there ever such a "state of nature"? Not perhaps over the whole world, though in America many savages live in this nasty and brutish fashion. If however, that were not so with particular men, "yet in all times kings and persons of sovereign authority, because of their independency, are in continual jealousies, and in the state and posture of gladiators; having their weapons pointing and their eyes fixed on one another—that is their forts, garrisons, and guns upon the frontiers of their kingdoms—and continual spies upon their neighbours." The argument is certainly not obsolete, nor the remark which follows. "Because they uphold thereby the industry of their subjects, there does not follow from it that misery which accompanies the liberty of particular men." Now where every man is at war with every man, "the notions of right and wrong, justice and injustice have no place. Where there is no common power there is no law; where no law, no injustice. Force and fraud are in war the two cardinal virtues." Justice and

injustice "relate to men in society, not in solitude." In such a state of things, there can be "no *mine* and *thine* distinct, but only that to be every man's that he can get and for so long as he can keep it."

> ". . . the good old rule
> Sufficeth them, the simple plan,
> That they should take who have the power,
> And they should keep who can,"

as Wordsworth puts it. This is the "ill condition" in which man is placed "by mere nature." There is a possibility of his getting out of it, partly because some passions, fear of death, desire of comfort, and hope of securing it induce men to peace, and partly because "reason suggesteth convenient articles of peace."

This is Hobbes's famous theory that the "state of nature" is a state of war. It does not imply, he says, that men are "evil by nature." The desires are not themselves wicked, though at times they may cause wicked actions. "Children grow peevish and do hurt if you do not give them all they ask for; but they do not become wicked till, being capable of reason, they continue to do hurt." A wicked man is a child grown strong and sturdy; and malice is a defect of reason at the age when reasonable conduct is to be expected. Nature provides the faculties but not the education. The doctrine should be tested by its truth, not by its pleasantness. Hobbes accepts in part the method of Machiavelli, who clearly announced that he was concerned with what actually happened, not with what ought to happen. To adopt that plan is to undertake to tell unpleasant truths, and to tell unpleasant truths is, according to most readers, to be "cynical." Hobbes

incurred the blame; but, at least, he was so far pursuing the truly scientific method. Up to this point, indeed, he was taking the line which would be followed by a modern inquirer into the history of institutions. Warfare is part of the struggle for existence out of which grow states and the whole organisation of civilised societies. A modern would maintain, like Hobbes, that in admitting the part played by selfish force in the development of society, he does not assert the wickedness of human nature. He only asserts that the good impulses cannot acquire the desirable supremacy until a peaceful order has been established by the complex struggles and alliances of human beings, swayed by all their passions and ambitions. But, here we come upon an element in Hobbes's theory of which I have already spoken, namely, the Law of Nature. The "laws of human nature," in the scientific sense, expressing the way in which human beings actually behave, are identified with the Law of Nature as an ideal or divine law, which declares how men ought to behave. Hobbes professes to show that the sovereign has certain "rights" as well as certain powers; and, moreover, that those rights are far from being recognised in many countries and especially in England. He is not simply pointing out how it came to pass that Charles I. and his parliament had got into conflict, and thence inferring the best mode of settling the disputed points; but he desires to show that the "Law of Nature" decides the question of their conflicting rights. The "Nature" which prescribes the right cannot be identical with the "Nature" which gives the power and determines the facts.

Hobbes's next point, therefore, is to show what are the "Laws of Nature." Every man has a right, he says, to use his own power for his own preservation. A "Law of Nature" is a precept found out by reason, forbidding him to do the contrary: that is, to destroy himself or his means of self-preservation. Now, in the "state of nature" just described, every man has a right to everything—even to another man's body. He has a "right," that is, because nature makes self-preservation the sole aim of each man, even when it implies the destruction of others. But it is plain that, while this is the case, no man's life or happiness is secure. "Nature," therefore, orders men to get out of the "state of nature" as soon as they can. Hence we have the twofold principle. It is the "fundamental *law* of nature" that every man should "seek peace and follow it"; and the fundamental "*right* of nature" is that a man should defend himself by every means he can. Peace makes self-defence easy. It follows that a man should "lay down his right to all things" if other men will lay down theirs. This is identified by Hobbes with the "law of the Gospel": "*Whatsoever you require that others should do to you, that do ye to them*" or (which he takes to be equivalent); "*Quod tibi fieri non vis alteri ne feceris.*" A man may simply renounce or he may transfer a right. In either case, he is said to be "obliged" not to interfere with the exercise of a right by those to whom he has abandoned or granted it. It is his "duty" not to make his grant void by hindering men from using the right; and such hindrance is called "injustice." We thus have Hobbes's definitions of Obligation, Duty, and Justice. Injustice, he observes, is like an absurdity in logic. It is a contra-

diction of what you had voluntarily asserted that you would do.

From these definitions, Hobbes proceeds to deduce other "Laws of Nature," and finds no less than nineteen. The third law (after those prescribing peace and self-defence) is that men should keep their "covenants." He afterwards deduces the duties of gratitude, sociability, admission of equality—the breach of which is pride—equity, and so forth. If, he says, the "deduction" seems "too subtile," they may all be regarded as corollaries from the "golden rule." That rule, however, is itself deducible from the rule of "self-preservation." We do good to others in order that they may do good to us. "No man giveth," as he says, by way of proving that gratitude is a virtue, "but with intention of good to himself." . . . "Of all voluntary acts, the object is to every man his own good." That, one would rather have supposed, is a reason for not being "grateful" to anybody. We must interpret "gratitude" in the prospective sense—with an eye to the favours to come. It is prudent to pay your debts in order to keep up your credit. In one case he seems to deviate a little from his egoism. Justice means keeping covenants—obedience, that is, to his "third law." A man who does a just action from fear, as he remarks, is not therefore a just man; his "will is not framed by the justice, but by the apparent benefit of what he is to do. That which gives to human actions the relish of justice is a certain nobleness or gallantness of courage, rarely found, by which a man scorns to be beholden for the contentment of his life to fraud or breach of promise." He should have held, it would seem, that the will is always

framed by the "apparent benefit." The inconsistency (if there be one, for even this appears to be a case of "glory") is explicable. Hobbes has to deduce all the "Laws of Nature" from the law of self-preservation. That, no doubt, may show the expediency of making a "covenant" with your neighbours, and even the expediency of generally keeping it. But it must also be granted that there are occasions in which expediency is in favour of breaking covenants. The just man, the ordinary moralist would say, is a man who keeps his word even to his own disadvantage. That, on the strictest interpretation of Hobbes, is impossible. Nobody can do it. Justice, however, in the sense of "covenant-keeping," is so essential a part of his system, that he makes an implicit concession to a loftier tone of morality, and admits that a man may love justice for its own sake. This, however, seems to be an oversight. Hobbes is content to take for granted that each man will profit by that which is favourable to all, or that the desire for self-preservation will always make for the preservation of society. The Law of Nature, we see, is simply an application of the purely egoistic law of self-preservation. It represents the actual forces which (in Hobbes's view) mould and regulate all human institutions. But in sanctioning so respectable a virtue as "justice," it takes a certain moral colouring, and may stand for the ideal Law of Nature or Reason to which the actual order ought to conform.

There is another reserve to be made: the laws of nature are not properly laws. They are only "theorems concerning what conduceth" to self-preservation. They become laws proper when they are "delivered in the

Word of God"; and he proceeds in the *De Cive* to prove them by a number of texts, and comes to the edifying conclusion that the "Law of Nature" is the Law of Christ. It is a theorem, for example, that to keep your word tends to self-preservation. But law means the command of a rightful superior; and until such a command has been given, it is not properly a "Law of Nature" that you should keep your word. The laws are always binding *in foro interno*: you are always bound to desire that they should come into operation; but they are not always binding *in foro externo*; that is, you are not always bound to "put them in act." Self-preservation is the fundamental law. But till other people keep the laws, obedience to them does not tend to self-preservation. If you are peaceful and truthful when other men are not, you will "procure your own certain ruin, contrary to all the Laws of Nature." That obviously will be the case in the "state of nature," where fraud and force are the cardinal virtues. There is, no doubt, a truth in this contention. The moral law, to become operative in fact, requires a certain amount of reciprocity. Actual morality clearly depends upon the stage of social evolution. In a primitive society where men have to defend themselves by the strong hand, we can hardly condemn the man who accepts the standard methods. Achilles would be a brutal ruffian to-day; but when Troy was besieged, he was a hero deserving admiration. He was perhaps in the true line of development. The chief of a savage tribe is, on the whole, preparing the way for a peaceful order. Even in the present day a philanthropist living in one of the regions where the first-comer is ready to shoot him at sight might think

it right to carry a revolver in his pocket, and, if necessary, to anticipate the shooting. Moral rules become useful in proportion as society perceives their value, and is more or less inclined to adopt them in practice. Otherwise, the man whose morality was of a higher type would be thrown away or summarily stamped out. Ought a man to be several generations in advance of his time? That is a pretty problem which I do not undertake to solve. In any case, Hobbes had a real and important meaning. He saw, that is, that the development of morality implies the growth of a certain understanding between the individuals composing the society, and that until this has been reached ideal morality proper to a higher plane of thought is impracticable if not undesirable. This leads to the theory of the social contract—the mutual agreement by which the great Leviathan is constructed.

The Law of Nature prescribes peace as a condition of security. But the law is "contrary to our natural passions," and "covenants without the sword are but words and of no strength to secure a man at all." It is therefore essential to create a common power to keep men in awe. Such creatures as bees and ants do, indeed, live at peace with each other and are therefore called by Aristotle "political creatures." Why cannot men do so? Because men compete and have private aims different from the common good. Men too can talk and therefore reason; they are "most troublesome when most at ease," because they then love to show their wisdom and control their rulers. The great difference, however, is that their agreement is "by covenant, which is artificial," whereas bees agree by "nature." By "artificial"

we must here understand what is made by reason. Since men can live, for they do sometimes live, in a "state of nature," a political society is not essential to man as man. It is a product of his voluntary action, and therefore implies a conscious deliberation. The only way, then, in which the common power can be erected and security established, is that men should "confer all their power and strength upon one man or one assembly of men." Then wills will be "reduced into one will, and every man acknowledge himself to be the author of whatsoever is done by the ruler so constituted." "This is more than consent or concord; it is a real unity of them all in one and the same person, made by covenant of every man with every man; in such manner as if every man should say to every man: '*I authorise and give up my right of governing myself to this man, or this assembly of men, on this condition that thou give up thy right to him, and authorise all his actions in like manner.*'" The Leviathan, or mortal God, is instituted by this covenant. He is the vital principle of political association, and from it Hobbes will proceed to deduce the whole of his doctrine.

Before considering its terms, one remark may be made. It is sometimes asked whether the expounders of the "social contract" in various forms meant to be understood historically. Did they mean to assert that at some remote period a number of men had held a convention, like the American States, and signed articles of association, to bind themselves and their posterity? Occasionally they seem to be driven to accept that position. Hobbes, however, can hardly have entertained such a belief. He is as ready as anybody to give an historical account of the origin

of actual constitutions. In his *Dialogue upon the Common Law*, for example, he, like Montesquieu, traces the origin of the British Constitution to the forests of Germany, and the system once prevalent among the "savage and heathen" Saxons. He recognises in the *Leviathan* that governments may arise from conquest or the development of the family as well as by "institution," and endeavours to show that the nature of sovereignty will be the same in whatever way it may have originated. A contract, it always has to be admitted, may be "implicit" (that is, may really be no contract at all), and there can be no doubt that, in point of fact, the social contract, if it exists, must at the present day be of that kind. Nobody is ever asked whether he will or will not agree to it. Men, as members of a political society, accept a certain relation to the sovereign, and unless they did so the society would be dissolved. That such an understanding exists, and is a condition of the existence of the State, would be enough for Hobbes, whatever the origin of the understanding. As we shall presently see, he would be more consistent, if not more edifying, if he threw the contract overboard altogether.

We must look more clearly at the terms of the hypothetical contract. The first point is that Hobbes's version differs from the earlier forms in this, that it is not a contract between the subject and the sovereign, but between the subjects themselves. The sovereign is created by it, but is not a party to it. This is Hobbes's special and most significant contribution to the theory. His reason is plain. Men, in a state of nature, that is, not acknowledging any common authority, cannot make a contract collectively. They

are, in that case, simply a "multitude." His own theory, he says in a note to the *De Cive*, depends upon clearly understanding the different senses in which this word may be used. A multitude means first a multitude of men. Each has his own will and can make compacts with his neighbours. There may be as many compacts as there are men, or pairs of men, but there is then no such thing as a common will or a contract of the multitude considered as a unit. This first becomes possible when they have each agreed that the will of some one man or of a majority shall be taken for the will of all. Then the multitude becomes a "person," and is generally called a "people." One man is a "natural person," and their common representative is an "artificial person," or, as he puts it, "bears the person of the people." It is, therefore, impossible to take the social contract as made between the sovereign and the subjects. Till they have become an "artificial person" they cannot make a contract as a whole. This social contract is presupposed in all other contracts. It must be at the foundation of all corporate action, and a compact between the sovereign and the subjects would suppose the previous existence of a unity which is only created by the contract itself. In the "state of nature" men can promise but cannot make a binding contract. A contract means an exchange of promises, and in a "state of nature" neither party can depend upon the other keeping his word. Obligation follows security. It seems rather difficult, perhaps, to see how you can ever get out of the state of nature, or why the agreement of each man to take the sovereign will for his own is more likely to be observed than any other agreement. Hobbes, how-

ever, assumes that this is possible; and when the Leviathan has once been constructed, it embodies the common will. The multitude becomes a person, and law, natural and civil, becomes binding.

3. "*The Leviathan*"

We have thus got our sovereign. His will is the will of all. He is under no obligation to his subjects, but is the source of all obligation. The ultimate justification of his existence, however, is still the desire for self-preservation, and for peace as an essential condition. Hence, indeed, arise the only limitations to the power of the sovereign, which Hobbes admits. Since I aim at my own security, I cannot lay down the right of resisting men who would kill me, or even men "who would inflict wounds or imprisonment." I may indeed agree that you shall kill me, but I cannot agree that I will not resist you. A criminal may be properly put to death, for he has agreed to the law; but he must be guarded on his way to execution, for he has not bargained not to run away. He adds another quaint exception. A man may refuse to serve as a soldier, at least if he can offer a substitute. "And," he adds, "there is allowance to be made for natural timorousness, not only to women, of whom no such dangerous duty is expected, but also to men of feminine courage." (They may have been born in 1588.) In such cases, it seems, disobedience does not "frustrate the end for which sovereignty was ordained." The principle applies to the case of *de facto* government—when the sovereign cannot defend me I need not obey him.

With these exceptions, the power of the sovereign is unlimited. The "mortal God" is omnipotent. The covenant once made is indefeasible. The parties to it cannot make a new covenant inconsistent with it. They cannot transfer their allegiance without the consent of the sovereign. Since there is no power of revising the covenant, it cannot be broken without injustice. Hobbes, we see, speaks of the sovereign as "representing" the subjects. But he does not "represent" them as a member of parliament represents his constituents, or as a delegate bound to carry out their wishes. He "represents" them in the sense that whatever he does is taken to be done by them. They are as responsible for all his actions as though he was their volition incorporated. It follows that his power can never be forfeited. The subjects have done whatever he has done, and in resisting him would be calling themselves to account. The social contract, considered as a covenant with the ruler, was alleged as a justification of rebellion. Hobbes inverts the argument. It can never be right to allege a "covenant" with the ruler, because that would justify rebellion. Since there is no common judge in such a case, this would mean an appeal to the power of the sword, and the power of the sword is what you have abandoned in covenanting. No individual again can dissent. If he does, he "may justly be destroyed" by the rest. If he consented to covenant, he implicitly consented to the covenant actually made. But, if not, he is left in the state of nature and may, therefore, "without injustice be destroyed by any man whatsoever."

The Leviathan, thus constituted, has therefore an

indefeasible title and is irresponsible. He is the ultimate authority from whom all rights are derived. The end of his institution is peace. A right to the end implies a right to the means. The sovereign may do whatever promotes peace. Since men's actions proceed from their opinions, he may suppress the publication of opinions tending in his opinion to disturb the peace. Since contention arises from the clashing of rights, he must determine men's rights; or, in other words, must be the supreme legislator. The law means the command of the sovereign, and whatever he commands is therefore law. He must, again, have the "right of judicature"; the right to hear and decide all controversies arising out of the law. The sword of justice belongs to him, and "the sword of justice must go with the sword of war." The sovereign has to protect the people against foreign enemies as well as to protect each man against his neighbour. He must decide upon war and peace; and when war is necessary must decide what forces are necessary; and, further, must decide how much money is required to pay for them. "The command of the militia" (the military forces in general), "without other institution, maketh him that hath it sovereign; and, therefore, whosoever is made general of an army, he that hath the sovereign power is always generalissimo." Other powers, such as the appointment of ministers, the distribution of honours, and the infliction of punishments obviously follow.

The Leviathan, thus invested with fullest power of legislature, judicature, and military command, with authority over opinion, and right to levy taxes, appeared to Hobbes's contemporaries to be a terrible portent. Charles I., trying to dispense with parlia-

ments, Cromwell ruling by armed force, Louis XIV. declaring himself to be the State, might be taken as avatars of the monster. Lovers of liberty of thought or action were shocked by a doctrine fit only for the graceless and abject courtiers of the Restoration. The doctrine, however, must be considered on more general grounds. Hobbes, in the first place, is not here arguing for one form of government more than for another. He prefers monarchy; but his special point is that in every form, monarchic, aristocratic, or democratic, there must be a "sovereign"—an ultimate, supreme and single authority. Men, he says, admit the claim of a popular State to "absolute dominion," but object to the claim of a king, though he has the same power and is not more likely, for reasons given, to abuse it. The doctrine which he really opposes is that of a "mixed government." As "some doctors" hold that there are three souls in one man, others hold that there can be more souls than one in a commonwealth. That is virtually implied when they say that "the power of levying money, which is the nutritive faculty," depends on a "general assembly"; the "power of conduct and command, which is the motive faculty, on one man; and the power of making laws, which is the rational faculty, on the accidental consent, not only of those two last, but of a third": this is called "mixed monarchy." "In truth it is not one independent commonwealth, but three independent factions; nor one representative person but three. In the Kingdom of God there may be three persons independent without breach of unity in God that reigneth; but where men reign that be subject to diversity of opinions, it cannot be so. And therefore if the king bear the person of the people, the

general assembly bear the person of the people, and another assembly bear the person of a part of the people, they are not one person, nor one sovereign, but three persons and three sovereigns." That is to say, the political, like the animal organism, is essentially a unit. So far as there is not somewhere a supreme authority, there is anarchy or a possibility of anarchy. The application to Hobbes's own times is obvious. The king, for example, has a right to raise ship-money in case of necessity. But who has a right to decide the question of necessity? If the king, he could raise taxes at pleasure. If the parliament, the king becomes only their pensioner. At the bottom it was a question of sovereignty, and Hobbes, holding the king to be sovereign, holds that Hampden showed "an ignorant impatience of taxation." "Mark the oppression! A parliament man of £500 a year, land-taxed 20s." Hampden was refusing to contribute to his own defence. "All men are by nature provided of notable multiplying glasses, through which every little payment appeareth a great grievance." Parliament remonstrated against arbitrary imprisonment, the Star Chamber, and so forth; but it was their own fault that the king had so to act. Their refusal to give money "put him (the king) upon those extraordinary ways, which they call illegal, of raising money at home." The experience of the Civil War, he says in the *Leviathan*, has so plainly shown the mischief of dividing the rights of the sovereign that few men in England fail to see that they should be inseparable and should be so acknowledged "at the next return of peace."

Men did in fact come to acknowledge it though not for some generations, and then by virtually transferring

sovereignty from the king to the parliament. A confused state of mind in the interval was implied in the doctrine which long prevailed, of the importance of a division between the legislative, executive, and judicial powers, and in the doctrine that the British constitution represented a judicious mixture of the three elements, aristocracy, monarchy, and democracy, whose conflicts were regulated by an admirable system of checks and balances. Whatever truth may have been expressed in such theories, they were erroneous so far as inconsistent with Hobbes's doctrine. A division of the governmental functions is of course necessary, and different classes should be allowed to exercise an influence upon the State. But the division of functions must be consistent with the recognition of a single authority which can regulate and correlate their powers; and a contest between classes, which do not in some way recognise a sovereign arbitrator, leads to civil war or revolution. Who is the sovereign, for example, was the essential question which in the revolt of the American colonies, and in the secession of the Southern States had to be answered by bullets. So long as that question is open, there is a condition of unstable equilibrium or latent anarchy. The State, as Hobbes puts it, should have only one soul, or as we may say, the political organism should have the unity corresponding to a vital principle.

The unity of the Leviathan seemed to imply arbitrary power. Since the king had the power of the sword, said Hobbes, he must also have the power of the purse. The logic might be good, but might be applied the other way. The true Englishman was determined not to pay the money till he knew how it

was to be spent; and complained of a loss of liberty if it was taken by force. Hobbes's reply to this is very forcible and clears his position. He agreed with Johnson that the cry for liberty was cant. What he asks, in his *De Cive*, is meant by liberty? If an exemption from the laws, it can exist in no government whatever. If it consist in having few laws, and only those such as are necessary to peace, there is no more liberty in a democracy than in a monarchy. What men really demand is not liberty but "dominion." People are deceived because in a democracy they have a greater share in public offices or in choosing the officers. It does not follow that they have more liberty in the sense of less law. Hobbes was putting his finger upon an ambiguity which has continued to flourish. Liberty may either mean that a man is not bound by law or that he is only bound by laws which he has made (or shared in making) himself. We are quite aware at the present day that a democracy may use the liberty, which in one sense it possesses, by making laws which are inconsistent with liberty in the other sense.

The problem, so much discussed in our times, as to the proper limits of government interference had not then excited attention. Hobbes seems to incline towards non-interference. Subjects grow rich, he says, by "the fruits of the earth and water, labour and thrift" (land, labour, and capital), and the laws should encourage industry and forbid extravagance. The "impotent" should be supported and the able-bodied set to work; taxes should be equal, and laid upon consumption, which (as he thinks) will encourage saving, and extravagance should be punished. So far his

principles are those which his contemporaries fully accepted. But he adds, emphatically, that the laws should not go too far. "As water enclosed on all hands with banks, stands still and corrupts, so subjects, if they might do nothing without the command of the law, would grow dull and unwieldy." They must not, however, be left too much to themselves. "Both extremes are faulty, for laws were not invented to take away but to direct men's actions, even as nature ordained the banks not to stay, but to guide the course of the stream; it is therefore against sound policy that there should be more laws than necessarily serve for the good of the magistrate and his subjects." Laws, moreover, should be clear, simple, and directed not to revenge, but to correction. "Leaders of a commotion should be punished; not the poor seduced people. To be severe to the people, is to punish that ignorance which may in great part be imputed to the sovereign, whose fault it was that they were no better instructed." This is, perhaps, the only remark of Hobbes which would be endorsed by Tolstoi. Hobbes was in favour of a despotic rule; but he was anxious that it should be thoroughly humane, and was fully sensible that the English laws were in great need of reform.

Such questions, however, were then in the background. The real issue with his contemporaries was different. Although his theory of sovereignty is avowedly independent of the particular form of government, he has a leaning to monarchy. He confesses that he has not proved this advantage demonstratively: "the one thing in the whole book," he adds, in regard to which he will make that modest admission. His

grounds are mainly that a king has a direct interest in promoting the welfare of his subjects, while popular leaders are prompted by vainglory and jealousy of each other, and popular assemblies are swayed by orators, for whom he always expresses contempt. "A democracy is no more than an aristocracy of orators, interrupted sometimes with the temporary monarchy of one orator": a Pym or a Gladstone. Hobbes's dislike to popular rule may be due in part to a certain intellectual difficulty. A sovereign must needs be a unit. But Hobbes is not comfortable with abstractions, or with so vague a body as the sovereign in a complex political system. He likes to have a king—a concrete, tangible individual in whom his principles may be incarnated. This prevents him from recognising one development of his theory which none the less was implied from the first. He perceives with perfect clearness and asserts in the most vigorous way that the division of sovereignty was the real weakness of the English system. His prejudices lead him to throw the whole blame upon the popular leaders. But a man of science should see that it is little to the purpose to blame individuals. Their discontent is a fact: a philosophical reformer should aim not at denouncing the symptoms, but at removing the causes of discord. It was clearly hopeless to persuade either side that it was in the wrong; but he might have tried to give an impartial diagnosis of the disease. He might then have admitted that the true solution might be, not to give the power of the purse to the king, but to give the power of the sword to the parliament. If he had contemplated that proposition, he might have foreseen (I do not mean that any human being could wholly

have foreseen) that his theory would apply to a radically changed order.

In fact, Hobbes's Leviathan represents what is called "the modern State." Supremacy of the law, absolute authority of the governing power and unity of the administrative system may be most fully realised when the "sovereign" is not an individual but an organic body. Government represents or "bears the person of the people," not in Hobbes's sense, that whatsoever the sovereign wills becomes their will, but in the inverse sense, that whatever they will becomes his will. Similar consequences follow in either version. Hobbes, for example, believes in the equality of man. It is one of his laws of nature that "every man acknowledge another for his equal by nature." Even if men were not equal, they would only make the compact on conditions of equality. Inequality of subjects, he says elsewhere, is made by the sovereign; and therefore all must be equal before the sovereign, as kings and subjects are equal before the King of Kings. Crimes of great men are "not extenuated but aggravated by the greatness of their persons." If they are favoured, "impunity maketh insolence; insolence hatred; and hatred an endeavour to pull down all oppressing and contumelious greatness, though with the ruin of the commonwealth." No subject can acquire any rights which will impede the full exercise of the sovereign power. The property of subjects in lands, for example, "consisteth in right to exclude all other subjects from the use of them, and not to exclude their sovereign, be it an assembly or a monarch." If land is not to be nationalised, the landowner's right is never absolute. So in all "systems subject—that is, in all associations

of any kind—no power can be enjoyed except what the sovereign chooses to allow." They must be thoroughly subordinate to his will, though in practice they have an awkward tendency to independence. Among the diseases of a commonwealth, Hobbes reckons great towns able to furnish an army (London, of course, is in his mind) "as well as the great number of corporations which are, as it were, many lesser commonwealths in the bowels of the greater, like worms in the entrails of a natural man." The principle is evidently fatal to privileged estates or corporations. The king or sovereign may call in councillors; but they must remain councillors only. That, for example, is the case with the House of Commons. But the House of Lords has no better claim. "Good counsel comes not by inheritance." The claim of certain persons to have a place in the highest council by inheritance is derived "from the conquests of the ancient Germans." Their chiefs were able to extract privileges for their posterity. Such privileges, however, are inconsistent with sovereign power, and if men contend for them as a right, they "must needs by degrees let them go," and be content with the honour due to their natural abilities.

This consequence of the supremacy of the sovereign illustrates one curious contrast between Hobbes and his opponents. The parliamentary party had to defend privilege against prerogative; and privilege has to be defended by precedent. The party, therefore, which would in modern phrase claim to be the "party of progress," justified itself by appealing to antiquity. When, indeed, you cut off a king's head you have to appeal to general principles. Constitutional precedents are not available. Milton had to claim indefeasible

rights for the people, and men like honest John Lilburne used language which anticipated Paine's *Rights of Man*. But in the earlier stages of the quarrel, Coke's gigantic knowledge of old records, and superstitious reverence for the common law, that is, for tradition and custom, was a stronghold of the party. Hobbes rejects the whole doctrine. An absolute political theory could not fit into the constitutional tradition or justify the heterogeneous products of historical accidents. His treatise on the common law expresses his aversion to Coke. He had already quoted him in the *Leviathan* to show how men's judgments were "perverted by trusting to precedent." "If the man who first judged, judged unjustly, no injustice can be a pattern of justice to succeeding judges." No custom, again, can justify itself. If "use obtaineth the authority of a law, it is not the length of time that maketh the authority, but the will of the sovereign signified by his silence." The tacit consent of a ruler may make a custom law. But "many unjust actions and unjust sentences go uncontrolled for a longer time than any man can remember." Only "reasonable" customs should be law, and evil customs should be abolished. The sovereign must decide what is reasonable and what should be abolished.

According to Hobbes, then, all political machinery is absolutely subordinate to the sovereign. His power is the sole working force, and every resisting element must be ejected or brought under control. The law is the expression of his will, and though he may enforce rules which have grown up independently, they can only exist on sufferance or by his tacit consent. In that respect Hobbes was at one with the most thorough-

going revolutionists who ever proposed to rearrange the political order upon an ideal plan, and to abolish all traditional law which is not in conformity with the dictates of reason. As a matter of fact, Hobbes's legal doctrine came to life again in the hands of Bentham and his follower, Austin, the legal lights of the "philosophical radicals." Maine observes that they had scarcely anything to add to Hobbes's analysis of the meaning of law. Hobbes puts his theory with all possible clearness in the *De Cive* and the *Leviathan*. "A law is a command of that person, whose precept contains in it the reason of obedience." The "civil law" is the command of the sovereign. We are bound to obey it because it is his command, as soon as we know it to be his. It must therefore be promulgated in order that we may know it, and have a "penalty annexed to it" in order that we may obey it; for "vain is that law which may be broken without punishment." When we are solemnly informed that a law is a command of the sovereign, enforced by a "sanction," the impulse of the unregenerate mind is to reply, "that is what I always supposed." Parliament and the policeman are phenomena too obvious to be overlooked; the great manufactory which is always turning out laws, and the rod which will smite us if we do not obey, are always with us. What else should a law be than a rule made by one and enforced by the other? We are told in reply that great confusion has arisen by confounding such laws with "Laws of Nature," laws which are supposed to exist in some transcendental world, and yet to supply the necessary basis for the laws of actual life, and which have to be applied to life by the help of such shifty and ambigu-

ous hypotheses as the social contract. I do not doubt that that is true, but it suggests one question. Austin and his disciples were always exposing the absurdity of the Law of Nature and the social contract, and yet their own doctrine coincides with that of Hobbes, who professes to make these theories an integral part of his system.

The explanation is simple, and gives the essence of Hobbes. According to Hobbes, in fact, the Law of Nature has a singularly limited sphere of action. It only exists, one may say, in order to repeal itself. Before the social contract, he says, every man has a right to everything, which is practically equivalent to nobody having a right to anything; for if the same thing belongs to two men, neither has a right against the other. But the contract is itself made by every man resigning all his rights to the sovereign. When he has thus made them over, he can no longer make any claims under the Law of Nature. The sovereign may command him to do anything (except, indeed, to help to hang himself) and he is bound to obey. The Law of Nature orders him to obey the positive law, and does nothing else. This comes, however, of being thoroughly logical, after making one initial error. The Law of Nature is simply the law of self-preservation, and whatever necessarily follows from it. But in what sense of "law" can we call self-preservation a law? In one sense it is what Hobbes calls a "theorem," not a law. It is (assuming its truth) a statement of fact. All men do aim at self-preservation. That is their one actual and, indeed, their one possible principle. If so, it cannot be a "law" at all in the ethical or strictly

legal sense. It expresses an essential condition of man's nature, and not a law imposed upon him from without. Men act for their own preservation as stones fall by gravitation. It is a way they have, and they cannot have any other. Taking for granted the truth of the "theorem," it will enable us to show how political institutions and "civil laws" have come into existence, but it does not show that they are right or wrong. It is as irrelevant to introduce that confusion as it would be to say that the angles of a triangle ought to be equal to two right angles. Hobbes's real theory comes out when we drop the imaginary contract altogether. We assume "self-preservation" as the universal instinct and, moreover, we must provisionally accept Hobbes's thoroughgoing egoism. Then so long as there is no common superior, the instinct produces competition and war, and implies the nasty, brutish "state of nature." How do men get out of it? Historically, he replies, governments may be made by conquest or developed out of the family, "which is a little monarchy." In both cases sovereignty is acquired by "force" and the subjects submit from fear. Governments, also, are made by "institution," that is, by the social contract; and in this case the motive is still fear, but fear of one another. Admitting, then, that even as an historical fact, sovereignty has been made by "institution" or contract, the essential motive is still the same. Each man sees that he will be better off, or preserve his life and means of living better if he and his will obey a sovereign than if they remain masterless. The hypothesis that States were deliberately contrived and made by a bargain between the separate atoms is, of course,

absurd historically, but is also irrelevant to Hobbes. The essential point is simply that settled order is so much more favourable to self-preservation than anarchy that every one has a sufficient interest in maintaining it. Peace, as he tells us, means all the arts and sciences that distinguish Europeans from Choctaws. The original contractors can scarcely be supposed to have foreseen that. But at least it gives a very good reason for obedience.

This comes out curiously in Hobbes's "exceptions" to the obligation of the contract. Men are not bound to kill themselves, because the tacit "consideration" for accepting the contract was the preservation of life and the means of life. He was logically bound to go further. If upon that ground they may repudiate the contract, they may break it whenever the end is frustrated, that is, whenever by keeping it they will be in a worse position. Moreover, since nobody ever acts except for his own good, they certainly will break it whether it is binding or not. In other words, the supposed contract is merely another version of the first principle of egoism: a man will always do what seems to be for his own interest. By calling it a contract he gets the appearance of extending the obligation to a wider sphere—to cases, that is, in which a man's interest is opposed to his contract. But it is only an appearance. It is indeed true that when a sovereign has once been set up, fraud and force cease to pay, as a general rule, and honesty becomes the best policy. But that is more simply expressed without reference to a contract. It merely means that the most selfish of mankind finds that it is worth while to have a policeman round the corner. Indeed the more

selfish he is the greater may be the convenience. By abandoning my supposed right to all things, I get an effectual right to most things; and that may be called a bargain, but it is a bargain which I shall only keep, and indeed can only keep, according to Hobbes, so long as the balance of profit is on my side. That is, it is not a bargain at all.

The facts, however, remain, and Hobbes manages to state a clear and coherent scheme. His position may be compared to that of the old economists. They used to maintain that in taking for granted the selfishness of mankind they were making a legitimate abstraction. Men, it is true, are not simply selfish, they have other motives than a love of money; but the love of money is so prominent an instinct in economic masses that we may consider it as the sole force at work, and so we may get a theory which will be approximately true, though requiring correction when applied to concrete cases. Hobbes virtually considers the political system in so far as it is based upon selfish motives and is worked by individual interests. No doubt such motives are tolerably prevalent. The obvious and most assignable motive for obeying the law is fear of the hangman; and all manner of selfish interests are furthered by maintaining a settled system of government. He thus obtains a clear conception of one important aspect of the political order. It means organised force. The State is held together by armies which protect us from invasion, and by the administrative system which preserves order at home. These are undeniable facts which it is as well to recognise clearly, and which are most vigorously set forth in Hobbes's *Leviathan*.

Certain limits to the value of his theory are equally plain. In the *Leviathan* Hobbes says that the "public ministers" are parts organical of the commonwealth, and compares the judges to the "organs of voice," the executive to the hands, ambassadors to eyes, and so forth. The analogy between the political, and the individual organism is implied in the whole theory. But the Leviathan is an "artificial" body, and "artificial" means mechanical construction. The individual is the ultimate unit, and though he resigns his rights to the sovereign, it is always for his own personal advantage. The comparison to a body suggests the modern phrase "the social organism," but the "artificial" indicates that Hobbes does not really interpret the Leviathan as an organism. It is a big machine or set of atoms held together by external bonds. Hobbes's egoism forces him to the doctrine that the particles gravitate together simply from fear—fear of the magistrate or fear of your neighbour. Sympathy is ignored, and such sentiments as patriotism or public spirit or philanthropy are superficial modifications of selfishness, implying a readiness to adopt certain precautions for securing our own lives and properties. This involves a one-sided view of the conditions of social and political welfare. It may be fully admitted that organised force is essential to a civilised society, that it cannot exist or develop without its military and judicial bodies, its soldiers and its judges, its hangmen, gaolers, and policemen, its whole protective apparatus. An animal cannot live without its teeth and claws. What is overlooked is the truth that other parts of the system are equally essential, and that there is a reciprocal dependence indicated by the word "organic." Society is held

together not simply by the legal sanctions, but by all the countless instincts and sympathies which bind men together, and by the spontaneous associations which have their sources outside of the political order. It may be granted to Hobbes that peace is an essential condition of progress, and that the sovereign must be created to keep the peace. It is equally true that the sovereign derives his power from other sources than mutual "fear" or dread of the "legal sanctions." Society could not get on without the policeman; but the policeman could not keep order by the simple force of his truncheon. Force must be "organised," but it cannot be organised out of simple egoism and fear. So when Hobbes defines law as the command of the sovereign, he is stating what in a fully developed State is an undeniable fact. The law is the system of rules promulgated and enforced by the sovereign power in spite of any conflicting customs. Historically speaking, laws are not the less the product of customs which have grown up spontaneously; they are the causes, not the effects of the sovereign's authority; and in the last resort the sovereign power must still rest upon custom; that is, upon all the complex motives from which arises loyalty to the State, and upon which its vitality depends.

Hobbes's position was indeed inevitable. The conception of sociology as a science, in which the political order is regarded as only part of the whole social system, had not yet arisen. That could not happen until historical methods of inquiry had begun to show their power, and the necessity of treating political questions in connection with the intellectual or the industrial evolution began to be perceived. The

"social contract" theory helped Hobbes to pass over in summary fashion the great historical problems as to the way in which the State has actually been developed; and therefore the State itself could be regarded as held together by the purely political and legal forces. When he had deduced the sovereign power from the principle of self-preservation, he seemed to himself to have explained everything. He had got to the one force which held the units together, as gravitation holds together the solar system. The relation between subject and sovereign is the one bond from which all others may be deduced. The thoroughgoing acceptance of this assumption leads to some of the singular results by which he startled his contemporaries, though he announces them with superlative calmness as demonstrated truths.

There are, as he has to admit, two sets of laws which may occasionally conflict with the laws of the State. In the first place, there is the moral law. Hobbes was perfectly well aware that a king might be a fool or a brute. It seemed to follow that laws might be contrary to the dictates of morality. His opponents could point out to him that some of the Roman emperors had been far from model characters. Besides their other weaknesses, they had occasionally thought it right to give Christians to lions. Again, the Christian Church claimed obedience, and Hobbes was an orthodox Christian. What is the subject to do if his sovereign orders him to break the moral law or to deny the truth of religion?

4. *The Moral Law*

Hobbes does not shrink from the logical result

of his principles. The moral law, he holds, is the Law of Nature. The Law of Nature, as we have seen, means essentially the law of self-preservation, and from that is deduced the "virtue" of justice, from which all other laws of nature are corollaries. Justice means keeping covenants, which becomes operative when a "coercive power" is constituted; that is, at the institution of the social contract. This contract therefore is at the base of all moral as well as of all political relations. It is presupposed in all particular contracts. Justice, the cardinal or rather the sole virtue, means keeping covenants, but also keeping the primitive contract to which all others owe their binding force. It implies, therefore, unconditional obedience to the sovereign who is the social contract incarnate. The sovereign cannot be unjust to a subject; for every subject is himself author of all that the sovereign does. Laws are the "rules of just and unjust; nothing being reputed unjust that is not contrary to some law." "The Law of Nature and the civil law contain each other and are of equal extent." "Justice, gratitude, and other moral virtues" are merely "qualities that dispose men to peace and obedience" until the commonwealth is instituted. Then they become laws, "for it is the sovereign power that obliges men to obey them." Thus the Law of Nature is part of the civil law, and "reciprocally the civil law is part of the dictates of nature."

Nobody, I believe, ever followed Hobbes in this audacious identification of law and morality. I must try to make some apology for a most estimable old gentleman misled by an excessive passion for logic. In the first place, it may be held that, whatever be the

ultimate meaning of morality, the actual morality of a race is evolved in constant correlation with its social organisation. Hobbes, who substituted the social contract for this process, and regarded sovereignty as the sole bond of union, could only approximate to this doctrine by making moral obligations a product of the sovereign will. It would be outrageous, no doubt, to suppose that a sovereign could make the moral law at his pleasure, so that lying might become a virtue or gratitude a vice if the lawgiver chose to alter the law. That is not Hobbes's meaning. Honesty, gratitude, and the like are, we see, useful qualities and parts of the Law of Nature as tending to self-preservation. The sovereign of course cannot alter that fact. What he can do is to make them obligatory by establishing the state of security which makes their exercise possible or prudent for the individual. In the "state of nature" the conduct would be self-destructive, which, when the commonwealth is formed, becomes self-preservative. But, we may ask, Will the power thus constituted aim at the end for which it was instituted? May not the sovereign do wrong? May he not be a brutal tyrant, or lay down laws which are immoral, because inconsistent with the welfare of the people? Is it in that case our duty to obey them? Must we submit to oppression or enslave our neighbours because the sovereign, whether king or parliament, commands it? Hobbes admits the possibility. "They that have the sovereign power may commit iniquity, but not injustice or injury in the proper signification." That is, the sovereign's immorality gives no right to the subject to disobey or even to protest. The reason is that the only alternative is anarchy. Bad laws are better than

no laws. "Good," as we have seen, means what a man desires and evil what he eschews. "One counts that good which another counts evil; and the same man what now he esteemed for good, he immediately after looks on as evil; and the same thing which he calls good in himself he terms evil in another." There is no such thing as absolute good. Hence it is impossible to make a common rule from the tastes of "particular" men. We have to consider what is reasonable; but "there are no other reasons in being but those of particular men and that of the city; it follows that the city is to determine what with reason is culpable." We are bound to obey the laws before we know what the laws are; for the State must precede the law. Therefore "no civil law whatever can be against the Law of Nature." The Law of Nature may forbid theft and adultery; but till we have civil laws we do not know what theft and adultery are. When the Spartans permitted their youth to take other men's goods, the taking was not theft. In other words, all law becomes positive law, for the Law of Nature only orders us to obey the law of the sovereign. It has been said that "whatsoever a man does against his conscience is sin." That is true in the "state of nature," where a man has no rule but his own reason. "It is not so with him that lives in a commonwealth, because the law is the public conscience by which he hath already undertaken to be guided." Otherwise nobody would obey further than it seemed good in his own eyes.

The subject, then, hands over the whole responsibility to the sovereign. Then "it is in the laws of a commonwealth as it is in the laws of gaming; whatso-

ever the gamesters all agree on is injustice to none of them." Are then the laws as arbitrary as the laws of a game? To that Hobbes has his answer: "The safety of the people is the supreme law." The sovereign is "obliged by the Law of Nature" to procure this end, "and to render an account thereof to God and to none but Him." Remembering the peculiarity of Hobbes's theology, it may seem that this responsibility is perhaps illusory. It is more to his purpose that, as he puts it, "the good of the sovereign and people cannot be separated." "It is a weak sovereign that has weak subjects, and a weak people whose sovereign wanteth power to rule them at his will." It is clearly to the interest of the sovereign, as it is also his duty, to maintain order. But to maintain order is, according to Hobbes, to enforce morality. The sovereign has to instruct his people in the "fundamental rights" of his office. To do so is "not only his duty, but his benefit also, and security against the danger that may arise to himself in his natural person from rebellion." He proceeds in his quaint fashion to point out that this duty of instructing the people is the duty of impressing upon them the Ten Commandments. Since kings are mortal gods, the commandments of the first table are applicable to them as well as to the Supreme Being. Clearly a man who proves that kings not only should but naturally will adopt the Ten Commandments is preaching a sound morality.

It is necessary, however, to remember Hobbes's general ethical conception. Every man acts simply for his own good. Every man, again, interprets "good" as that which pleases him. Order can only be established when every man sees that he will get more

good for himself by submitting to a common authority. When that is securely established, the individual will be repaid for sacrificing that right to everything which he could not enforce. But when that is done, the moral law is made supreme. For morality, according to Hobbes, is summed up in justice; that is, in observing the general contract according to which the distribution of good things is regulated and men are obliged to keep their particular contracts. Equality before the law and equality of taxation are also implied, for inequality leads to discontent. But in other respects every man may, and of course will, be guided by his own conceptions of "good." As I have said before, Hobbes is not in favour of extending the sphere of legislation. Laws are "like hedges," set "not to stop travellers but to keep them in their way. And therefore a law which is not needful, having not the true end of law, is not good." "Unnecessary laws are not good laws, but traps for money; which, where the right of sovereign power is acknowledged, are superfluous; and where it is not acknowledged, insufficient to defend the people."

This, it seems, is the essential meaning of Hobbes's identification of law and morality. They are, according to him, different aspects of the virtue which he calls justice. That means that a man acts morally, so far as he pursues his own ends without harming his neighbour; and legally, so far as he obeys the sovereign who enforces the security without which it is not a man's interest to act morally. No doubt this is a totally inadequate view of morality. It is the legal or purely external conception which supposes that the moral, like the positive law is satisfied by obeying

certain "sanctions" which make bad conduct unprofitable. But it does not imply that the moral law is "arbitrary" or made at will by the sovereign. It is the law of "self-preservation" regarded from a purely egoistic point of view.

5. *The Spiritual Power*

Hobbes's theory may lead to some pretty problems in casuistry. How far should a man's duty to the State override the dictates of his conscience? May a soldier refuse to serve in a war that he thinks unjust? Or a Quaker refuse to fight at all? May a man refuse to pay taxes if he disapproves of the purpose for which they are raised? To admit such liberty unreservedly is to approve of anarchy, and upon that ground some people become anarchists. The problem, however, does not often present itself in practice. Most laws are sufficiently in conformity with the average morality of the people to excite no protest. But another question was far more pressing, and to Hobbes seemed to be the really critical question of the day. What is to be done when the subject's religious convictions clash with his obligations to the State? To that problem Hobbes gave an answer in his first treatise, which was expanded in the *De Cive*, and given at great length and with many singular developments in the *Leviathan*.

His essential position is simple enough: the sovereign has to keep the peace. Now men's "actions proceed from their opinions," and therefore opinions must be governed in order to govern action, and governed in the interests of peace. He agrees

that in speculation "nothing ought to be regarded but the truth." True opinion, however, cannot be "repugnant to peace." "Yet the most sudden and rough bursting in of a new truth, that can be, does never break the peace but only sometimes awake the the war"; that is, where error is already prevalent and people are ready to fight for it. It follows that the suppression of an opinion "repugnant to peace" must also be the suppression of error. He limits the suppression, however, to the public teaching, through books or otherwise, of objectionable opinions, for he also holds that a man's private beliefs cannot be determined by force. The sovereign is therefore bound to forbid the open propagation of opinions by which his authority is subverted. The diseases which bring about the "dissolution of commonwealths" are seditious opinions. Besides the opinion that every private man is to judge of good and evil, there is the opinion that a man may claim supernatural inspiration: a pernicious doctrine which in this part of the world has been turned to account by "unlearned divines," sufficiently prevalent in the fanatical sects of the commonwealth.

But a still more vital power is represented by the claims of the papacy. This, in fact, means the cardinal error of a divided sovereignty. It is a setting up of "*supremacy* against *sovereignty*; *canons* against *laws*, and a ghostly authority against the civil." "Now seeing it is manifest that the civil power and the power of the commonwealth is the same thing, and that supremacy and the power of making canons . . . implieth a commonwealth, it followeth that where one is sovereign, another supreme—where one can make

laws and another make canons—there must needs be two commonwealths of one and the same subjects, which is a kingdom divided against itself and cannot stand." The "ghostly power challengeth the right to declare what is sin," and therefore the right to declare what is law, for sin is "nothing but the transgression of the law." As the civil power also declares what is law, it follows either that every subject must obey two masters, or that one of the two powers must be subordinate to the other. The civil authority has the advantage of being "more visible"; but the spiritual, though it deals in unintelligible doctrines, yet, "because the fear of darkness and ghosts is greater than other fears, cannot want a party sufficient to trouble and sometimes to destroy a commonwealth." The spiritual power, indeed, has an advantage, "for every man" (as he says in the *De Cive*), "if he be in his wits, will in all things yield that man an absolute obedience, by virtue of whose sentence he believes himself to be either saved or damned." Church or State, that is, must be supreme, or there will be a fatal disease which he quaintly compares to the epilepsy, a "wind in the head," which makes men fall into fire or water. When the spiritual power moves the subject "by the terror of punishment and hope of reward" of this supernatural kind, "and by strange and hard words suffocates their understanding, it must needs thereby distract the people, and either overwhelm the commonwealth by oppression or cast it into the fire of a civil war." Which then is to be supreme? A Church, like a State, must be an organised body and have a sovereign before it can be said to "will" or "command." He defines it therefore as a

"company of men professing Christian religion united in the person of one sovereign, at whose command they ought to assemble, and without whose authority they ought not to assemble." Now, in all commonwealths, an assembly in order to be lawful must have the warrant of the civil sovereign. There is no power on earth to which all commonwealths are subject, and the Christians in each State are subject to its sovereign and cannot be subject to any other power. Therefore a Church is the same thing with the civil commonwealth, which is "called a civil state, for that the subjects of it are men, and a church, for that the subjects thereof are Christians." "Temporal" and "spiritual" are "two words brought into the world to make men see double and mistake their lawful sovereign." Unless there is one governor there will be civil war between Church and State—"between the sword of justice and the shield of faith—and, which is more, in every Christian man's own breast between the Christian and the man."

The Church, in short, as a law-making or governing body must be fused with the State. Otherwise we have the fatal splitting of sovereignty. An antagonist might have replied that the unity might be equally secured by subordinating the State to the Church. An absolute theocracy, such as corresponded to the extremest claims of the papacy, would have satisfied the condition as fully as the secular sovereignty. To this Hobbes replies upon the historical ground. He denies that the Church of Rome, or indeed, that the spiritual power from the beginning of the world can make out any title to the sovereign power. Half of the *Leviathan*, namely the third part ("Of a Christian

Commonwealth") and the fourth ("Of the Kingdom of Darkness") is devoted to this argument.

It is a most singular performance. Hobbes has to argue from the Bible, and quotes texts as confidently as any contemporary divine. He protests, indeed, with an air of perfect candour, that he has only taken the plainest sense and that which is "agreeable to the harmony and scope of the whole Bible." But his exegesis brings out results which nobody before or since has ever deduced from the same authority. We may wonder whether he is sincere or laughing in his sleeve; whether, perhaps, he means simply an argument *ad hominem*; or a tacit suggestion that any conclusions you please can be extorted from the documents whose authority he is bound to admit. Our confidence is not increased by his apology for his paradoxes. He admits that one doctrine, which he proves, will appear to most men a novelty. "I do but propound it," he says, "maintaining nothing in this or any other paradox of religion, but attending the end of that dispute of the sword concerning the authority, not yet amongst my countrymen decided, by which all sorts of doctrine are to be approved or rejected." Anyhow the results are too grotesque to be given at length, or to be quite passed over.

His contention is essentially that there never was a divinely instituted spiritual authority independent of the civil authority. The civil and ecclesiastical powers, for example, were united in Abraham, afterwards in Moses, and then in the high priests. "Whoever had the sovereignty of the commonwealth among the Jews, the same had also the supreme authority in the matter of God's external worship," though the

Jews got into many calamities from not properly understanding the rights of their rulers. The old dispensation, it might be supposed, was superseded by the Christian Church, and its rulers would represent Christ on earth. But "the Kingdom of Christ" was not of this world. That, according to Hobbes, means that it will not be established until a new world begins upon "the general resurrection." Then Christ will become a King in the literal sense. The good will come to life in their old bodies (for there is no such thing as a separate soul) and live eternally. They will not marry or be given in marriage, for otherwise the earth would obviously not be big enough to hold the resulting population. There will be no death vacancies. The wicked will also come to life in order to receive condign punishment. They will suffer "the second death," which cannot, as he thinks, mean eternal life in torture, but simple extinction. As they will die, they may propagate; and therefore hell may be eternal in the sense that there will always be a supply of the wicked to be punished, though every individual will come to an end. This amazing theory is meant to show that since Christ's kingdom is not to become a reality until the resurrection, the Church is, for the time being, not a kingdom at all but a mere voluntary association. The apostles and their successors could only persuade, not command, and had no coercive powers. Excommunication could only mean amicable separation, not the infliction of a penalty. The Church did not acquire legal authority until it was invested with power by the emperor.

These queer speculations are connected with a more

interesting set of arguments. Hobbes wishes to meet the claims of the Church to supernatural authority. He cannot deny—explicitly at any rate—that Moses and the prophets were divinely inspired. What he can do is to argue that their inspiration does not transmit supernatural authority to their descendants. Moses himself knew that he was speaking to Jehovah. But in what way Jehovah spoke to him is "not intelligible." The Jews could only know that Moses told them that he was so speaking, and that makes a vital difference. When a prophet says that God has spoken to him in a dream, that is only to say he "dreamed that God spoke to him, which is not of force to win belief from any man that knows that dreams are for the most part natural." To say that a man speaks by "supernatural inspiration is to say he finds an ardent desire to speak in some strong opinion of himself, for which he can allege no natural and sufficient reason. So that, though God Almighty can speak to a man by dreams, visions, voice, and inspiration, yet he obliges no man to believe he hath so done to him that pretends it, who, being a man, may err, and which is more, may lie." As miracles have ceased, we can now only appeal to the Holy Scriptures. What, then, is the authority of the Scriptures? Hobbes goes through many of the passages, which have been mentioned by later critics, to show that the books ascribed to Moses and others were written after the time of the supposed authors. The Psalter must have been put into its present form after the captivity, as some of the psalms refer to it. The authority of the Old Testament in general can only be traced to the time of Esdras, who discovered the books when they were lost; and the canon of

the New Testament cannot be proved to have been authoritative before the Council of Laodicea in the year 364 A.D. Hobbes, indeed, believes that the New Testament books are genuine, for a characteristic reason: The doctors of the Church had claimed supreme power by the time of the Council and thought pious frauds commendable. If they had altered the books "they would surely have made them more favourable to their power over Christian princes . . . than they are." Why, then, do we believe the Scriptures to be the Word of God? Everybody, he says, admits the fact of inspiration, but no one can know it except "those to whom God himself hath revealed it supernaturally." Men believe, though they do not know, for reasons so various that no general account of them can be given. But "the question truly stated is, by what authority they (the Scriptures) are made law." The answer is obvious. They must be imposed by a sovereign authority; and, if so, either by sovereigns each absolute in his own territory, or by the "Vicar of Christ" as sovereign of the universal Church, who must then have the power of judging, deposing, or putting to death the subordinate sovereigns. Meanwhile, every man is "bound to make use of his natural reason" to test the claims of a prophet. It is clear that a great many prophets are not to be trusted. When Ahab consulted four hundred prophets, all but one were impostors, "and a little before the time of the captivity the prophets were generally liars (see Jeremiah xiv. 14)." We must judge them then by their conformity to the established authority. When Christians do not take their

own sovereign for God's prophet, they must take their own dreams or obey "some strange prince," or be bewitched into rebellion and the "chaos of violence and civil war" by some fellow-subject.

Hobbes proceeds to treat of miracles. We take an event to be miraculous when we do not perceive its cause. The first rainbow "was a miracle because the first," and consequently strange. A rainbow is not a miracle now, because it is no longer strange, even to those who do not know the cause. That may be a miracle to one man which is not so to another. Before astronomy became a science, a man who predicted an eclipse would pass for a prophet. Juggling, ventriloquism, and thaumaturgy are common, and "there is nothing how impossible soever to be done that is impossible to be believed." When we hear of a miracle, we must therefore consult the lawful head of the Church how far we are to give credit to the story. "A private man has always the liberty, because thought is free, to believe or not believe in his heart those acts that have been given out for miracles," and he should consider who is likely to profit by them. "But when it comes to the confession of that faith, the private reason must submit to the public, that is to say, to God's lieutenant."

Hobbes was thus suggesting doubts as to the evidences of the established creeds, doubts which were to bear fruit in a later generation. Spinoza, in the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, treated the questions on wider grounds and "went a bar" beyond what Hobbes has dared to say. No active controversy, however, arose till a later period. Hobbes's

argument, we may notice, has a resemblance to that which Hume made famous. Both of them argue, not that miracles are impossible, but that the proof of a miracle is always insufficient. Hobbes has to assert that the events recorded in the Scriptures really happened, but endeavours to show that there is no proof that they happened. We must believe on authority, and, moreover, on the authority of the Church. Only, by authority we do not mean the intellectual authority of competent inquirers, but the legal authority of the sovereign. Rather, we may believe what we like, but we may only profess the belief which the law allows us to profess.

We have still to see why he rejects the alternative of the supremacy of the Church. The existing commonwealths are independent of each other, and therefore not subject in fact to any central authority; but it may still be urged that they ought to be subject to this. To this he replies partly by the familiar Protestant arguments from texts, and maintains that Bellarmine's interpretations of "feed my sheep," and so forth, are erroneous. But the main answer is given in the last book upon "The Kingdom of Darkness." There he takes up the position which was already assumed in his account of the natural history of religion. The gods of the heathen are, as we have seen, mere "phantasms"—dreams mistaken for reality and so forth. The Church of Rome adopted the same methods. By misinterpreting Scripture the priests made people believe in devils and exorcism, in purgatory and the efficiency of sacraments, and other doctrines calculated to increase their power and give them authority over the secular rulers. They adopted

many ceremonies and superstitions from the Gentiles, and they introduced the vain and erroneous philosophy of Aristotle to perplex men's minds. The argument ends by a quaint comparison between the papacy and the "kingdom of fairies." The whole "hierarchy" has been built up like the "old wives' fables in England concerning ghosts and spirits and the feats they play in the night." It is needless to go into the details; but I may quote the striking phrase which sums up his theory. "If a man consider the original of this great ecclesiastical dominion, he will easily perceive that the papacy is no other than the ghost of the deceased Roman empire sitting crowned upon the grave thereof." "The Roman Church," says a great living authority, "in this way privily pushed itself into the place of the Roman world-empire of which it is the historical continuation."[1] A comparison of the phrases may illustrate Hobbes's vigorous grasp of thought as well as command of words.

His ascription of sovereignty in religious matters to the civil authority was startling enough, and led him into some difficulties. What, for example, are we to say of the Christian martyrs? They were clearly rebels, and yet have been generally praised for their conduct. Hobbes has to "distinguish." To be a true martyr, a man must have "received a calling to preach." He must, moreover, have seen the facts to which he testifies. If he testifies to the resurrection, he must have conversed with Christ before his death and seen him after he was risen. Otherwise he can only be a "martyr" (that is, a witness) to other men's

[1] Harnack's *What is Christianity?* p. 252.

testimony. Moreover, there is only one article for which a man ought to die, namely, that "Jesus is the Christ." We are not to die for every private tenet of our own or for tenets which suit the clergy. Naaman set a very convenient precedent, and if, like him, we obey our sovereign in using words which do not express our thoughts, the action is not ours but our sovereign's. To resist an infidel sovereign is to "sin against the laws of God (for such are the laws of nature) and the council of the apostles" (*i.e.* to obey princes). If we do not take Naaman's view, we must expect our reward in heaven. "But," he asks, "what infidel king is so unreasonable as, knowing he has a subject that waiteth for the second coming of Christ after the present world shall be burnt, and intendeth then to obey him (which is the intent of believing that Jesus is the Christ), and in the meantime thinketh himself bound to obey the laws of that infidel king (which all Christians are obliged in conscience to do), to put to death or persecute such a subject?" Certainly if all that is meant by belief in Christ is an intention of obeying him as a king after the general resurrection, the infidel king would be very unreasonable. They sometimes are.

Hobbes sums up his belief in one phrase. "Religion," he says, in dedicating his *Seven Problems* to Charles II., "is not philosophy but law." We have already seen what is the view which he takes in his natural history of religion. Religion is the "fear of power invisible." That is the essential meaning of the instinct, and legislators have taken advantage of it to strengthen their own authority and to keep the peace. Whether the objects of worship be real or "phantasms,"

religion is useful just so far as it promotes that end. We know nothing of God except His power; and it is upon His power that His authority is founded. All the other attributes ascribed to him "are not to declare what He is," but how much we honour Him. "The end of worship among men is power." The worship of God is directed by "those rules of honour that reason dictateth to be done by the weak to the more potent men in hope of benefit," or for fear of damage, or thankfulness for good received. Prayer and thanks are simply an acknowledgment of God's power. Rational worship "argues a fear of Him, and fear is a confession of His power." I will not ask whether Hobbes's theological conceptions would really justify even this account of religion. It comes apparently to this: that religion is a system of beliefs and observances imposed by the sovereign in order to give force to the "Law of Nature," that is, the law of self-preservation and the obligation of the social contract. Modern thinkers have given a good many definitions of religion; but this I fancy is not among them.

Hobbes's purpose is clear enough. The Church, as he holds, is an organised body which has taken advantage of phantasms and dreams to claim supernatural powers and to forge a system of spiritual weapons capable of encountering the secular weapons of the sovereign. Then it has elaborated the sham philosophy of the schoolmen, the *empusa* which strangles thought by words and enables it to bewilder men by mysterious dogmas which are really nonsense. In attacking the Church, therefore, he is defending the cause of enlightenment against a systematic obscurantism. He traces

the growth of the spiritual power through three stages: first, the claim of priests to make belief obligatory instead of free; secondly, the concentration of this power in the hands of bishops; and thirdly, absorption of the episcopal in the papal power. Queen Elizabeth got rid of the pope; the Presbyterians of the bishops; and the Presbyterians have now lost their power, so that "we are reduced to the independency of the primitive Christians," every man believing what he pleases. This, he says, "is perhaps the best," first, because there ought to be no power "over the consciences of men, but of the Word itself, working faith in every man"; and secondly, because it is unreasonable to ask a man to accept the reasons of others, "which is little better than to venture his salvation at cross and pile." Priests ought to know that power is preserved by the same virtues by which it is acquired—"that is to say, by wisdom, humility, clearness of doctrine, and sincerity of conversation; and not by suppression of the natural sciences and of the morality of natural reason; nor by obscure language; nor by arrogating to themselves more knowledge than they make appear; nor by pious frauds"; nor by other faults which tend to scandal. Hobbes would thus seem to be in favour of complete religious toleration and absolute indifference of the State in religious matters. How is this reconcilable with the theory that "religion is law"?

The explanation is not far to seek. The endless religious controversies had been made an argument on one side for the necessity of a central spiritual authority, and on the other for a limitation of the essentials of religious belief to the points upon which

all men were agreed. Hobbes having, in words at least, to accept the Christian doctrines, declares that the only article of faith "which the Scripture maketh simply necessary to salvation is this, that Jesus is the Christ": an article which, as we have seen, he manipulates strangely enough. Other dogmas need not trouble us. "For it is with the mysteries of our religion as with wholesome pills for the sick; which swallowed whole have the virtue to cure; but chewed are for the most part cast up again without effect." Now when the State orders us to swallow, it will allow us to take our pills whole. The State, as he says, can only take notice of our words. It is one of the vital errors of the false teachers to "extend the power of the law to the very thoughts and consciences of men." That, he intimates, means the Inquisition, which he detests as heartily as any man. The only interest of the State is in peace. The secular sovereign will not want to rouse theological quarrels or to burn his subjects to enforce dogmas. Persecution is the natural consequence when a great corporation has been built up upon the ground of a dogmatic system, and when all its interests depend upon enforcing orthodoxy. The destruction of such a power is Hobbes's real aim. If we subordinate the Church to the State, the secular sovereign will be no longer the tool of the priest, and, even if he prescribes the verbal acceptance of certain dogmas, he will take care that they do no harm. His aim will be to suppress controversy, not to hinder speculation.

The doctrine of toleration was developing, though slowly enough, and Hobbes saw one difficulty clearly. If by "religion" we mean simply the creed of the

individual, the case for toleration is obvious and overpowering. It must be wrong, that is, to punish a man for accepting what he believes to be true. But a practical difficulty remains when "religion" is regarded as the creed of an organised body, which has therefore a system of laws. What is to be done when such laws come into conflict with the laws of the State? The difficulty need not occur if as a matter of fact the Church and State do not represent conflicting theories, or if there be an agreement as to a demarcation of their spheres of action. But as religious motives affect men's conduct as a whole, the Church can hardly be indifferent to every part of the action of the State. When differences occur, as for example when the State undertakes the charge of education, there is even in our own day a great difficulty in applying the principle of toleration, however much it may be accepted in general terms. In Hobbes's time, such difficulties were of course much greater. The Puritan proposed to alter the constitution of the Church, but not to diminish its authority or to divorce it from the State. As sects multiplied, the principle of toleration became more widely accepted; for it is plain that when you are in a minority of one your only logical plea for liberty must imply universal toleration. Meanwhile Hobbes, disgusted by the struggles of rival sects and the claims of the Catholic church to interfere with political matters in the interest of the hated dogmatic system, took a short cut to a solution. Instead of trying to effect a reconciliation, he would simply put one power under the feet of the other, and the dominant power should be that which is least given to bigotry.

In some respects Hobbes's solution was that which

actually succeeded. The claim of the pope to depose kings was of little practical importance; and Hobbes, like his countrymen, seems to have been unduly nervous. Giant Pope, though far from being so decrepit as Bunyan thought, was ceasing to have much authority over the political world. The Church of England was following the course which Hobbes desired. He complains that the bishops made certain claims to independent authority, but remarks that at any rate they had practically submitted to the king. That tendency developed, and Hobbes would have been thoroughly content with the eighteenth century, when the Church ceased to make any claim to corporate power, and the clergy became useful dependants on the possessors of patronage.

NOTE

During the last months of his life Sir Leslie Stephen was writing this book. When he could no longer work he asked me to see it through the press. Its readers should, I think, be told that he had some thoughts of adding to it a few sentences about the influence exercised by Hobbes on later philosophers, the French Encyclopædists and the English Utilitarians, and that he gave me some notes, by the aid of which this addition might have been made. However, before his death I had sent him word that the book was so complete that no second hand ought to touch it. I have only made those small changes that must always be made whenever a book is printed. He expressly charged me to acknowledge his debt of gratitude to three of his precursors: his friend Croom Robertson, Dr. F. Tönnies, and M. Georges Lyon.

F. W. Maitland.

INDEX

A

Advancement of Learning (Bacon), 85.
Althusius Johannes, *Politics* of, 177.
Andrewes, Bishop, 179.
Areopagitica (Milton), 69.
Aristotle, 118, 191.
Arlington, Lord, 60.
Armada, The Spanish, 178.
Athenæ Oxonienses (Anthony Wood), 2.
Aubrey, John, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 17, 25, 34, 37, 46, 48, 49, 57, 60, 61, 65, 66.
Augustine, St., 160.
Austin, John, 207, 208.
Autobiography, Hobbes's, 2.
Ayton, Sir Robert, 11, 12.

B

Bacon, 1, 12, 13, 58, 61, 67, 76, 85.
Behemoth, 4, 26, 29, 30, 60.
Bellarmine, Cardinal, 179, 229.
Bentham, Jeremy, 124, 207.
Berkeley, Bishop, 79, 99
Blount, Charles, 68-9.
Bodies, Properties of, 99.
Boyle, Robert, 51, 54, 76.
Bramhall, Bishop, 36, 50, 150, 151, 154, 158, 160, 161, 162, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170.
Brief Lives (Aubrey), 2.
Browne, Sir Thomas, 72.
Buchanan, George, 58.
Buckle, Henry T., 86.
Budget of Paradoxes (de Morgan), 55.
Bunyan, John, 236.
Burnet, Bishop, 60.

C

Calvin, 160.
Calvinism, 160.
Cambridge, University of, 51, 60.
Catholicism, Roman, 30, 178, 179.
Cause and Effect, 101 *seq.*
Cavendish, William, 1st Earl of Devonshire, 6, 7.
Cavendish Family, 6, 7, 8, 11, 13, 15, 16, 19, 20, 36, 37, 38, 43, 46.
Charles I., 27, 28, 186, 197.
—— II., 39, 41, 45, 57, 58, 59, 60, 67, 231.
Chatsworth, 7, 14.
Chillingworth, William, 25.
Christianity, 78.
Church and State, 176 *seq.*, 222 *seq.*
Circle, Squaring the, 52-6.
Clarendon, Lord, 24-5, 26, 37, 41, 42, 56, 60.
Clinton, Sir George, 16.
Cluvius's, *Historia Universalis* 61.
Coke, Sir Edward, 61, 206
Collins, Anthony, 69.
Cominges, Comte de, 58.

Comte, 155.
Condillac, 94.
Constitution, The British, 193.
Cooper, Samuel (miniature painter), 58.
Copernicus, 77, 79.
Cosin, Bishop, 40, 45.
Cowley, 46, 47, 48.
Cromwell, Oliver, 3, 41, 42, 198.

D

Davenant, Sir William, 46, 47.
Decameron Physiologicum, 55.
Descartes, 20, 21, 32, 33, 37, 38, 65, 78, 81, 82, 91, 98, 107, 111, 146.
De Cive, 34, 35, 37, 39, 42, 78, 150, 173, 182, 190, 194, 201, 207, 220, 222.
De Corpore, 50, 52, 66, 70, 77, 79, 87, 88, 95, 98, 105, 114, 149, 150.
De Corpore Politico, 114, 173, 182.
Definitions, 92 *seq.*
De Homine, 114.
De Quincey, 15.
Determinism, 157 *seq.*
Devonshire, Earls of, *see* Cavendish.
Dialogue upon the Common Law, 61, 193, 206.
Dioptrique (Descartes), 33.
Divinity, The Schoolmen's, 78.
Donne, John, 179.
Dort, Synod of, 158, 159, 160.
Dreams, 115 *seq.*
Dryden, 67.
Du Verdus, 36.

E

Eachard, 68.
Edwards, Jonathan, 159.
Effect, Cause and, 101 *seq.*
Elizabeth, Queen, 233.
Ethics (Spinoza), 122.

F

Falkland, Lord, 25, 26.
Farquhar's *Constant Couple*, 68.
Fell, Dr., 2.
Filmer, Sir Robert, 49.
Final causes, 102 *seq.*
Freewill, 157-72.

G

Galileo, 20, 21, 22, 77, 79, 111, 125.
Gassendi, 20, 24, 35, 37, 40, 45, 78.
Geometry, 79-81.
Gierke, Professor, 177.
Gladstone, 203.
God, Existence of, 146; attributes of, 147 *seq.*
Godolphin, Sidney, 25, 37, 38.
Gondibert (Davenant), 46, 48.
Grotius, 49, 177.

H

Hales, John, 25.
Hamilton, Sir William, 85, 148.
Hammond, Henry, 25.
Hampden, John, 199.
Harnock's, *What is Christianity?* 230.
Hartley, David, 118.
Harvey, William, 48, 78, 79, 81, 111.
Henry VIII., 6, 178.
Heylin, Peter, 20.
History of the Sabbath (Heylin).
Hobbes, Thomas, his autobiography, 2; family history and birth, 3; school, 4; goes to Magdalen Hall, Oxford, 4; youthful pursuits, 6; tutor to the Cavendish family, 6-8; long connection with the family, 8; makes the grand tour, 8; translates Thucydides, 9, 12; friendship with eminent men, 11, 12, 13; death of his patron, 15; travels with another

pupil, 16; first acquaintance with Euclid, 17, 70, 71, 77, 80; inquiries into the nature of motion, 18, 21, 77, 78, 80; devotes himself seriously to philosophy, 19; renews his connection with the Cavendish family, 19, 20; further travels, 20; recognised by contemporary philosophers, 20; new acquaintances at home and abroad, 20, 21, 25; circulates summary of his philosophical ideas, 27; goes to France for greater safety, 27; controversy with Descartes, 33; publishes *De Cive*, 34; begins to write *The Leviathan*, 34; tutor to the exiled Prince of Wales, 38; severe illness, 40; publication of *The Leviathan*, 40; returns to England, 41, 45; accused of inconsistency and disloyalty, 41, 42, 43, 54; suspected of atheism, 44, 45, 59, 60, 67-9, 144, 150, 154; makes acquaintance of various distinguished men, 46-49; controversy with Bishop Bramhall, 50; publishes *De Corpore*, 50; attempts to square the circle, 52, 53, 55; attacks the universities, 51-7; controversy with John Wallis, 52-5; becomes a favourite at Court, 58; receives a pension of £100 a year from Charles II., 59; examination and suppression of his writings ordered, 59, 60; his fame abroad, 61; writes a long Latin poem in his eightieth year, 61; publishes *Decameron Physiologicum* in his ninetieth year, 55; produces a work on Common Law, 61; translates the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, 62; death, 63; starting-point of his philosophical speculations, 73, 74, 84; aim of his philosophy, 84; subject of philosophy, 84; theory of the universe, 72 *seq.*, 80 *seq.*; divergence from Descartes's views, 81-2; theory of logic, 87 *seq.*; physical science, 98 *seq.*; psychology, 109 *seq.*; theology, 144 *seq.*; freewill, 157 *seq.*; political system, 173 *seq.*; his doctrine of motion, 18, 21, 77, 78, 80, 81, 84 *passim*; materialism of his philosophy, 82, 98; philosophical methods, 12, 13; ethical theories, 21; hostility to established beliefs, 75; attitude towards the spiritual authorities, 29-32, 34, 45, 57, 75; heterodox views, 76; comparison of Hobbes with Bacon, 12, 13; resemblance between Hobbes and Herbert Spencer, 73; a great thinker, 1; a born logician, 70; Euclid his type of reasoning, 88; failure as a mathematician, 53; intellectual energy and boldness, 55, 56, 61, 62; personal timidity, 56, 156; shortcomings, 65; contemporary estimate of him, 67; general opposition aroused by his views, 67; his one-sidedness, 71; idiosyncrasies, intellectual and moral, 70; his unemotional nature, 72; dogmatic and aggressive methods, 77; views of love, 132; cynical views of human nature, 139; style, 9, 10, 117; favourite authors, 65; personal attractiveness, 23-4; sincerity of his friendship, 23, 24; personal appearance and habits, 63-4; devotion to music and tennis, 64.

Hobbes, Thomas (father), 3, 4.

—— Mrs. (mother), 3, 4.

—— John (brother), 4.

—— Francis (uncle), 4.

"Hobbism," 74, 146.
Hoeffding, Professor, 84.
Human Nature, 108, 114, 120, 123, 127, 132, 139.
Hume, 99, 118, 229.
Huxley, 81.
Huygens, 58, 59.

I

Ideas, Association of, 118-19.
Imagination, 107, 115.
Infinite, the, 109, 149.

J

James I., 7, 8, 179.
Johnson, Samuel, 201.
Jonson, Ben, 11, 12.
Joweth, Benjamin, 10.

K

Kenneth, 61.
Kepler, 78.
Kings, Divine right of, 179 *seq.*

L

Language, 92.
Laud, Archbishop, 31.
Laughter, 130, 131.
Law, Moral, 214 *seq.*
Leibnitz, 52.
Leighton, Archbishop, 24.
Leviathan, The, 1, 2, 32, 34, 36, 38, 40, 41, 42, 43, 59, 60, 61, 65, 68, 69, 73, 82, 114, 120, 127, 132, 136, 150, 154, 173, 182, 193, 195, 199, 206, 207, 211, 212, 220, 223.
—— the Great, 182, 183, 192, 194, 195, 196, 197, 200, 204, 212.
Lewes, G. H., 117.
Lilburne, John, 206.
Locke, John, 1, 67.
Logic, 87-97.
Longomontanus, 38.
Louis XIV., 59, 198.

M

Machiavelli, 185.
Magdalen Hall, Oxford, 4, 5.
Maine, Sir Henry, 61, 207.
Malmesbury, 3.
Mansel, Henry, 148.
Manwaring, Bishop, 28.
Mare Clausum (Selden), 20.
Mary, Queen of Scots, 178.
Meditations (Descartes), 32, 81, 82.
Meditationes Sacrae (Bacon), 85.
Memory, 107.
Mersenne, Marin, 21, 22, 23, 24, 32, 33, 35, 38, 40, 45, 56, 67, 78.
Method (Descartes), 32.
Mills, John, 94.
Milton, 21, 24, 49, 58, 157, 158, 205.
Miracles, 228.
Molesworth's edition of Hobbes's Works, 70.
"Monarchomachist" controversy, 178.
Montaigne, 67.
Montesquieu, 193.
More, Sir Thomas, 58.
Morley, Bishop, 25.
Motion, Nature of, 18, 21, 77, 78, 80-1, 84.

N

Names, 89-90.
Natural History of Religion (Hume), 155.
Nature, Law of, 173 *seq.*, 186, 187, 188, 189, 191, 208, 215.
—— State of, 185 *seq.*
Newton, Sir Isaac, 52, 111.
Nicholas, Sir Edward, 43, 44.

O

One-sidedness, 71.
Oxford, 4, 5, 51, 52.

P

Paine, Thomas, 206.

Papacy, The, 30, 173, 179, 221 *seq.*, 229, 230, 235, 236.
Pascal, 67.
Passions, 125 *seq.*
Pepys, Samuel, 60.
Petty, Sir William, 37, 51.
Phenomena, Natural, 109 *seq.*
Place, 100.
Politics, Hobbes's System of, 173 *seq.*
Pollock, Sir Frederic, 122.
Presbyterianism, 31.
Psychology, 114 *seq.*
Punishment, Eternal, 170-1.
Puritans, The, 5, 30.
Pym, John, 203.

R

Ravaillac, 178.
Richelieu, 17.
Rights of Man (Paine), 206.
Robertson, Croom, 12, 55.
Rochefoucauld, 139.
Rousseau, 13.
Royal Society, The, 51, 52, 54, 76.

S

Savile, Sir Henry, 51.
Scargill, 60.
Science, Physical, 73, 75, 76, 82, 98, 113.
Selden, John, 20, 48, 49.
Self-preservation, 189 *seq.*
Sensation, 18.
Sense, 106-7.
Seven Problems, 231.
Sheldon, Bishop, 25.
Sorbière, 13, 35, 58, 59.
Sordello (Browning), 136.
Sovereignty, 181, 186, 192 *seq.*
Space, 98-9.
Spencer, Herbert, 73, 122, 148.
Spinoza, 100, 101, 122, 156, 228.
Spirits, 83.
Spiritual Power, 220 *seq.*
Sprat, 13.
Stewart, Dugald, 85, 94.
Suarez, 179.
Sully, Professor, 131.
Swift, 5.

T

Table Talk (Selden), 49.
Tenison, Archbishop, 15.
Testament, The Old, 226.
—— The New, 227.
Thought, 84, 87-8.
Thucydides, Hobbes's Translation of, 9, 10, 12.
Time, 98-9.
Toland, John, 69.
Toleration, Religious, 233 *seq.*
Tolstoi, 202.
Tönnies, Dr., 18, 55.
Tractatus Theologico - Politicus (Spinoza), 156, 228.
Truth, 87.
Tyrannicide, 178.

U

Universities, The, 19, 50, 51, 52.

V

Venice, Constitution of, 17.
Voltaire, 66.

W

Waller, Edmund, 16, 37, 40, 46, 48.
Wallis, John, 41, 42, 52, 53, 54, 88.
Warburton, William, 69.
Ward, Bishop, 51, 53.
Wentworth, Sir Thomas, 16.
White, Thomas, 59, 60.
Wood, Anthony, 2.
Words, 89-90.
Wren, Sir Christopher, 51.

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